

**Embodied Identity as Process: Performativity through Footwear
in Mid-Medieval (AD 800-1200) Northern Europe.**

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Vol I

**For the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of the University of London**

**Institute of Archaeology
University College London**

2003



ABSTRACT

Title: Embodied Identity as Process: Performativity through Footwear in Mid-Medieval (AD800-1200) Northern Europe.

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A strong case is made for the re-thinking of identity as a dynamic and performative process, rather than a label. Using ideas from Wiessner and others, the relationship between material culture and interactive processes of emulation and rejection is refined, in a framework derived from Bourdieu (particularly *Bodily Hexis*) and Goffman (particularly *Impression Management*). These ideas are explored through a rigorous study of stylistic variability in footwear from Mid-Medieval Northern Europe. It is argued that the large amounts of footwear, which is shaped to and marked by the wearers' bodies, are potentially rich sources of information about the active 'impression management' of the people of the time. That the period defined for this project tends to be seen by historians as one of timeless continuity for all but the elite, and a time when 'identity' is primordial and its substance almost archetypal, makes, it is argued, the variability particularly worth pursuing.

18 archives are sampled and the footwear recorded in a systematic manner. These primary sources are extended through the use of secondary sources, and contextualised (within the limits of iconographic conventions) through the careful and systematic quarrying of the iconography of the human body in contemporary representations. The outcomes suggest a complex situation of change over time, from distinct regional patterns in the 9th century through convergence in the 10th century which culminates in relative homogeneity in the 11th century, with marked regional contrasts returning in the 12th century. Within this, there are similarities and differences in preferences, which raise important questions about links between, for example, York, Dublin and London in the 10th century, and the interplay of consumer preference and artisan practice at the time. Timeless continuity and primordial identity are not affirmed through the footwear, except in particular significant contexts. In keeping with the firmly hermeneutic approach used throughout the project, the thesis concludes with a summary of new directions suggested by the research.

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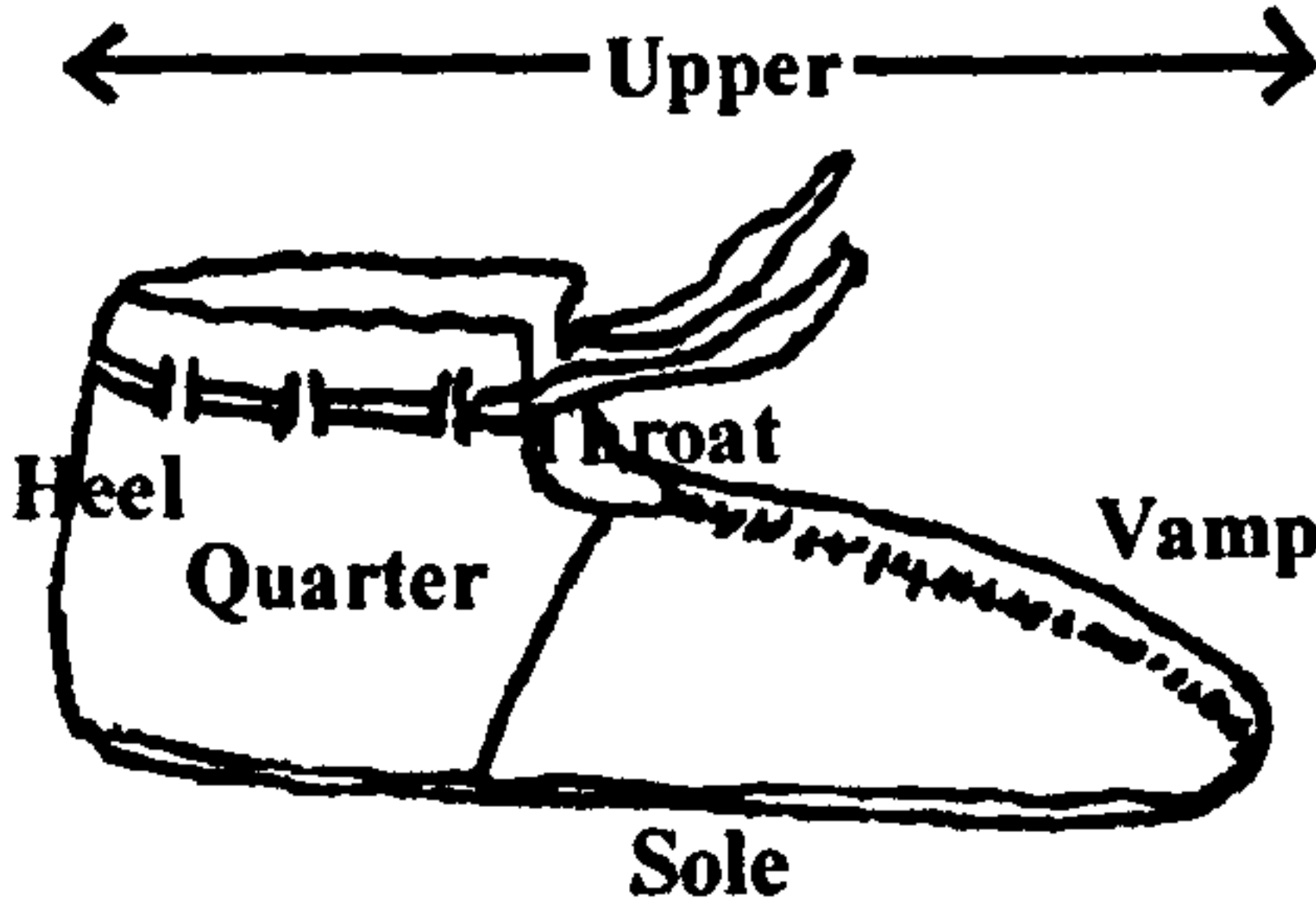
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Key Glossary terms for Footwear



Prologue

In the winter of 1995-6, I was working onsite as a long-term volunteer at a large and prestigious excavation in the City of London, known as Number One Poultry. The usual huge quantities of fascinating Roman-period material were being brought to the Finds team and dealt with by knowledgeable specialists. A dramatic moment came, however, when a substantial leather object was brought across to us, submerged in water. Preliminary cleaning showed it to be a complete shoe. Not only was it carefully made and well designed but also, on being turned over, the wear marks of the foot were clearly visible and the repair patches crudely attached to keep the foot dry were still in place. This was the most personalised and evocative archaeological object I had ever seen: all the more so because it came from an 10th – early 11th century context and almost no reference material existed for footwear from this period.

As the season progressed, large numbers of these 10th /11th century shoes emerged from the excavations. (Fig. P.1). They were paralleled by still more from other recently excavated London sites such as Upper Thames Street. Most of these were not covered in the only existing reference document, Pritchard's 1991 contribution to Vince's volume on Saxo-Norman Finds (Vince 1991). A popular volume in the *Medieval Finds from London* series, *Shoes and Pattens*, (Grew & De Neergaard 1988) dealt only with the 12th century onwards. Yet early on in this book, a photograph of two early 12th century shoes (Fig. P.2) highlighted a fascinating situation. It showed two contemporary shoes that appeared technically identical yet were of drastically different shapes. Knowledge gained from Number One Poultry suggested that one shoe represented the past – 'tradition' – and the other represented a denial of the past. What was going on?

Subsequent work on North European footwear has opened up a great many more questions arising from closer examination of these elaborate and varied items of body-wear. Not the least of these involves the potent symbolism of footwear in

the cognitive worlds of North Europeans over a long span of time. For this research, however, footwear is being used simply as the only item of body wear which survives in quantity, albeit only where taphonomic conditions are right for the survival of leather. The key assumption is that the conspicuous variation in footwear style is related to dynamic identification strategies and that through rigorous comparison it might be possible to access the instantiation of identities over time and space.

This focus leads directly into the use of that venerable archaeological concept 'diffusion'. In this research however, diffusion is not being used as a crude explanatory device but as a process that is itself the subject of inquiry. Diffusion is being treated as the outcome of multiple (but not unbounded) decisions on the part of individuals, and may be conscious or largely unconscious: the decision not to copy is regarded, in this research, as being as significant and dynamic as the decision to emulate. Shennan, following Wiessner, suggests that such assertive decisions can be related to natural selection in Darwinian terms (Shennan 1989b: 21-2). Furthermore, considered in terms of social contexts, the wearing of a particular shoe-style can be interpreted as a major risk taking activity, even a criminal offence (see Pickering on the Sumptuary Regulations of 1363, for example). The potential, in short, is considerable.

This account is in three major sections. The first, Section A, contains five chapters that set out the infrastructure for the research. This includes deeper consideration of the archaeological, anthropological and historical perspectives and contributions. Each chapter ends with an appropriate statement of intentions for the research itself and Chapter 5 sets out the research procedures to be used. Section B contains the findings, subdivided into a long Chapter 6, which uses the primary sources (archived footwear), Chapter 7 which uses published secondary sources, and Chapter 8 which uses representational sources. Section C uses the framework set out in Section A and the findings from Section B to offer a synthesis in Chapter 9. Chapter 10 then sets out some new questions and possible ways forward.

Throughout this enquiry, a resolutely hermeneutic approach has been used. Hodder has repeatedly made a case for this model in excavational work (1992, 1995, 1999) but it is less often argued for so-called Finds work. Finds research tends to be seen as a technical-level classifying and cataloguing task, a perception which perhaps accounts for its lack of popularity with young archaeologists (see the editorial to *London Archaeologist* Vol 10 No 2 Autumn 2002: 30). One important overarching aim of this project has been to go beyond the taken-for-granted models used for the 'technical' into the explicitly interpretative. That this also involves the speculative is inevitable, and gives the project its spice, just as it does in the field. That the speculation is rooted in careful and systematic excavation of the archive is, however, as essential as careful and systematic excavation in the field: the Appendices to this volume contain a variety of material providing evidence for rigour of this kind in this project. In short, 'finds' research can be as adventurous (and as tediously routinised) as excavational and landscape studies, as I hope this account will show.

Figure P.1 Freshly excavated leather arrives in the Finds domain
at Number One Poultry, January 1996



Figure P. 2 Two early 12th century shoes from London.
Taken from Grew & De Neergaard 1988: 12

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Section A

Infrastructure

This section begins with a chapter exploring the key concepts contained in the research title, particularly those of *identity*, *embodiment* and *performativity*, and how these may be investigated using footwear from the research domain. The focus then shifts to existing work on footwear from the research domain, and evaluates the degree to which this can contribute to the research aims. The question of *historical context*, both micro and macro scale, is addressed in the third chapter, with a critical examination of pre-assumptions in relation to the research aims. The fourth chapter evaluates recent relevant thinking in so-called *Middle Range theory*, particularly that focussing on the concept of *stylistic variation* and outlines ways that this can be useful, within strict limits. Finally, the lessons learned from these discussions, and outlined at the end of each chapter, are brought together and woven into a *research strategy*, which meets the rigorous requirements of this enterprise.

Chapter 1

The problematization of identity

Introduction: the paradox of 'identity'

The term *identity* is used freely in much archaeological discourse (as in *cultural identity*) and in mainstream discourse (as in *identity card*). It is not seen as a problematic concept in itself: we all know what it means. Consider, however, the Concise Oxford Dictionary (4th edition 1950) definition:

Identity: Absolute sameness: individuality, personality

Thus already there is a seeming ambivalence: does the term relate to ways in which people are the same or the ways in which they are different? The Latin root word *idem* is translated as 'the same' Yet the Microsoft Thesaurus gives *individuality* as a synonym to *identity* with terms such as *uniqueness*, *distinctiveness* and *self* as alternatives: *sameness* has no place.

In this chapter I shall be arguing that this ambivalence and its seeming resolution in the more modern definition is not a minor pedantic issue but a signifier of a major shift in paradigms over the last few decades in western cultures.

Archaeologists are not immune from this, although each individual's location within the historical process has its own implications. The possibility that what is happening is not an unconscious, unintentional change but the outcome of conscious and highly effective propaganda – in short, ideological- will be considered. Four published research projects involving 'identity' as a crucial aspect will then be examined, compared and assigned a contextual locus and

finally, the latest edition of a popular archaeological magazine will be surveyed for the use of identity concepts in the discourse of archaeology.

Drawing on this, I will then lay out my own theoretical position and research aims, using a qualified version of the thinking of Bourdieu, where identification as process is the focus rather than identity as a reified concept. The chapter will conclude with a clear and justified statement of the parameters for my research.

a) From Ascription to Achievement: Identity in transformation

The tendency for human beings to group together into bounded collectivities, defined simultaneously by similarity within and difference from those not within, has often been seen as a primordial part of human nature, natural and obvious: no man is an island. Group concepts such as a tribe, a nation, a society, a culture, are taken for granted realities in the experiential world in which I live. What seems to have changed, however, is the degree to which membership of these – and, therefore, the dynamics of identification as process rooted in them – is seen as immutable. At its strongest, the shift in perception of collective identities involves a denial of the gestalt of the collective – there is, in the words of Margaret Thatcher, no such thing as society, only individuals continuously creating their own realities. The implications of this shift, which from some perspectives is seen as implying a dangerous fragmentation (see for example Aronowitz, quoted in Callinicos 1995:202) and from others as empowering (see Giddens 1991, for example), are usefully considered through a closer examination of the deconstruction of some of the former taken-for-granted, essentialist categories, i.e. sex, race, age, kinship and estate. At the end of this section, the ideological implication of these shifts will be drawn together

Sex, based on unarguable biological criteria associated with reproduction, has long been seen in essentialist and oppositional terms. The recent best-selling book *Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus*, (Gray 1993, paperback 2001) which attempts to validate this in terms of hormones (the new source of essences) shows that this perception is by no means superseded. The very

existence of the book, however, demonstrates a shift of the assignation of sexual identity from the taken-for-granted *doxic* into the *heterodoxic* where the categorisation needs to be defended – it represents an assertion of *orthodoxy* (see Part c in this chapter for fuller discussion of these terms)

This is not the place to summarise the feminist movements of the second half of the 20th century, but it is fair to see the chief enabling concept in the fierce and productive arguments as that of *gender*. The concept of gender released individuals, at least potentially, from the absolutes of biology: gender is, in Moore's terms (Moore 2000:261), a rhetorical concept-metaphor which has had enormous power in terms of changing perceptions, expectations and interaction globally. Yet, as Meskell so interestingly discusses (Meskell 1996: 4-6), much feminist discourse is addressed to issues of inequality and oppression without any questioning of the significance of the biological criteria on which the categorisation is based. Indeed, many feminists work to enhance and sharpen the concept of the female as absolute category, seeking to enhance 'its' value through, for example, reinterpretation of historical evidence for the importance of women (e.g. Gimbutas' theories of mother goddesses: Gimbutas 1974) and promotion of collectivities based on femaleness. New categories, based on sexual activity rather than reproductive function, have however, introduced a further dimension into the study of gender – multiple categories rather than just two opposed but symbiotic ones – and the recent promotion of the concept of bisexuality in popular media suggests an even further shift towards a concept of malleability in terms of gender identities. The last decade has, however, seen claims, notably by Judith Butler (Butler 1993: 3-15), that the conceptual separation of *sex* and *gender* is invalid, and that sex is as much a performative cultural construct as gender i.e an attempt has been made to haul the category of 'biological' sex out of the doxic and make it part of discourse.

Archaeologists in this country came late to these shifts (Scott 1997:1-5, Gilchrist 1997:42-45), compared with anthropologists and other social scientists and far behind politicians: consider the Sex Discrimination laws of the 70s and the ILEA anti racist and sexist policies of the early 80s which involved library purges, language transformation and constant scrutiny of classroom practice. Even in the

USA, concessions to awareness came late to archaeologists. A seminal article published in 1984 by Conkey and Spector had, according to Claassen (1992:1) little impact and only in the 90s did it begin to spread beyond a small circle (Wylie 1992: 15). The issue of the invisibility of women was swiftly and effectively addressed (e.g. in contributions to Moore & Scott (eds) 1997). Androcentric interpretations, based on pre-theoretical (i.e. doxic) stereotyping became a heated topic of discourse, at least amongst academics. This was not confined to prehistorians: there are published accounts of gendered interpretations of classical Greek contexts, for example, (Bennett 1997, Osborne 1994) and Gilchrist has lead the way in the Medieval European studies (Gilchrist 1994, 1997). Attention has been drawn to the possibility of gender roles other than the doxic oppositional male/female (Sorenson 2000: 41-59, Broch-Due, Rudie & Bleie 1993), and contextual situations in which inequality and oppression of female by male should not be taken for granted. (Meskell 1996) Most recently, signs are emerging of an acceptance that categorisation based on sex/gender may not have been as fundamental in the ways some people constructed and were constructed by their realities, and that age, class, race or some other variable on which categorisation of similarity/difference can be constructed might have been more significant (Strathern 1993 – and a number of current PhDs at UCL, London).

Thus, it would seem, new ways of thinking, of interpreting and theorising have come out of challenges situated in the wider socio-historical context. The old structural oppositions rooted in essentialist male-female categorising have disappeared: even Bourdieu, whose Kabyle account in *A Theory of Practice* (1977: 157) was predicated on such a pre-theoretical assumption, has followed his own recommendations of *objectivated objectivism* and eased back (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 172), becoming more pragmatic and flexible. Profound problems, however, still remain. It is possible to see the agency concept, so popular in academic archaeology in recent years, as a rhetorical metaphor predicated on androcentric values (Gero 2000), and to see the rise in popularity of somatic studies which attempt to encompass the emotional as predicated on gynocentric values.

As with sexual difference, racial difference/ similarity and therefore 'racial identity' has been and still is defined in absolute biological terms, and seen as immutable: like sex, it is used as an essentialist category. The enabling rhetorical concepts in the discourse over the second half of the 20th century have been *ethnicity* (with built-in assumptions about the existence of 'ethnic groups') and *culture* (as in a cultural group or domain). There is considerable slippage between the concepts however: the Race Relations Act is seen (although not without argument) as relevant to situations in which the discrimination is based on difference rooted in 'cultural' or 'ethnic' difference. The place of 'religious' difference is, however, highly contentious, perhaps because the pre-theoretical assumption is that identity drawn from religious beliefs is not 'inborn' in a primordialist way but is 'optional' and an expression of freewill. That this is not necessarily a view shared by those who identify with a particular religious group shows the complexity and contradiction inherent in these conceptual categories.

From the 19th century, those people who called themselves archaeologists worked with the concept of 'culture domains', based on an assumption that it was possible to identify bounded territorial units, within which a 'people' shared a common material culture, different from that of neighbouring domains. Although always presented as tentative and problematic by some (Gordon Childe 1957: 24), nevertheless the concept of past 'folks' or 'peoples' or 'empires' with characteristic material culture is deeply embedded in modern culture: e.g. 'Vikings' with longships, 'Romans' with villas. Most notoriously with the Third Reich, these 'neutral' factual entities have been used to justify policies of expansion and fragmentation, inclusion and exclusion (Veit 1989).

In the last 30 years, the inadequacies of this approach have been exhaustively debated. One major area of debate centres on the relationship between a shared sense of identity in 'ethnic' terms and material culture, with arguments drawn from the work of anthropologists. (e.g. Barth 1969, Hodder 1982a). Another centres on the whole concept of meaningful bounded collectivities of this kind as universal, pointing out the imposition of 'tribal' identities by imperial powers, both in modern times (Banks 1994: 164-71, Ucko 1996, Jones 1997: 45-51) and in the past (see Chapter 3), and the constant generation of new identities

especially in conditions of migration and assimilation. The current generally accepted concept of ethnicity amongst archaeologists in contact with academia is that of ethnicity based on self-ascription and as existing only through affirmation in everyday practice, which will link in some way with material culture. This notion of self-ascription leaves open the possibilities of either actively reinforcing boundary through overt and deliberate signalling (restricted contact with others, for example, and highly visible markers of group identity - see Chapter 4 for fuller discussion) or having highly permeable and ephemeral boundaries, which can barely be said to exist.

Self and other labelling based on biological age may seem to be the most primordial categorising of all: the seven ages of man, with death a biological universal. Unlike the identity categories discussed above, the individual's location within categories has non-optional built-in change. Yet even a slight glance at different perceptions of these 'inevitables' shows variability, especially in relation to death and the ability of the post death individual to interact with the pre-death individual. Categories such as 'child' have conspicuously negotiable boundaries (see for example the modern differences in legal age for sexual relationships and marriage across Europe) and in recent years the concept 'kidult' has been only semi-jokingly developed to label large numbers of 20-30 year olds who are not involved in the child rearing domesticity which has occupied previous generations at that age, and who can spend time and money on 'childish things'. Indeed, age cohorts - peer groups - are a very important source of identity in modern Britain. Although taken for granted as 'right' and 'natural', this is by no means a universal pattern – in other parts of Europe such as Italy, mixed age in a family context is much more common, as it is within immigrant Asian communities in the UK. The linking of peer-group to material manifestations is as valid as it is for ethnicity, as Larick showed in his analysis of Loikop spears. (Larick 1991: 317-8)

Archaeologists have shown little interest in age-identification processes in past contexts. This is all the more surprising given that the most popular theoretical formulations (see later in this chapter) at present emphasise the internalisation of dispositions in the early years of life. Logically, the experiential world of the

under sevens is the key to understanding the world of the later adults. Yet children are invisible in archaeological interpretation, except as objects cared for by women. (see Part 3 in Moore & Scott 1997) Further more, although sex-gender is often used as an analytical tool in the interpretation of cemetery sites, age, although mentioned, is not seen as of interest other than for estimating life expectancy. I would see age-based identification strategies, unlike the others discussed above, as being under theorised in archaeology, and seen as a personal attribute rather than a collective one. Living as we are in an age where 'youths' and 'the elderly' are everyday collective terms, this is a curious gap.

The 'blood' family or kin group has been seen as one of the great human universal collectivities. Belonging to or possessing a family is 'normal', and a family-kin name is seen as the most important generalising identifier of individuals. Anthropologists have long worked with concepts of kinship and lineage, seeing the relationships based on ties of 'blood' or 'marriage' as paramount in non-complex interactive contexts. All of this has come under attack in recent years. Some anthropologists now see kinship as a rhetorical metaphor. 'Blood relationship' becomes viewed as a construct rather than a biological fact, and as malleable and optional as gender, ethnicity and class (Carter Bentley 1987:27, Banks 1994: 186). Transformations in family as lived experience in modern Britain seem to confirm this fluidity. Yet, ironically, for the first time ever blood relationship can be 'proved' using DNA.

British archaeologists tend to work on a taken for granted assumption that household equals family, in spite of the observation of many alternative spatial arrangements in other parts of the world. Another curious assumption is that of monogamy: the content analysis of material used to highlight the stereotyping of women in archaeological publications could also have been used to highlight the stereotyping of family structure. I have not yet come across an archaeological interpretation of an occupational site in Northern Europe in terms of polygamous families, although there is documentary evidence for polygamy amongst the pagan northerners up until the 11th century AD at least (Brønsted 1960:24, Benedictow 1993: 48). This lack of imagination will be particularly problematic in the micro-scale agent oriented studies currently fashionable.

Finally comes the categorisation of people by their estate i.e their locus within a stratified social situation. This assignation of identity may seem the furthest removed from the biologically justified categorising discussed so far. Certainly the enabling concept of social class, rooted in socio-economic activity and therefore at least potentially mutable and flexible, has a longer historical ancestry in Northern Europe than concepts such as gender and ethnicity. The 13th century Rigspula saga setting out a neat explanation for the physiological differences between aristocrat, thegn and peasant (Brønsted 1960: 238-40) seems almost comical in its blatant ideological justification through naturalisation of elitism. Yet recent publicity in the media about a gene for criminality identifiable in the DNA of individuals suggests that notions of essentialist collective identity (membership of the criminal class) are by no means vanished. This area will be discussed much more fully in Chapter 3 on historical context.

This brief discussion, which has only touched upon major issues, has suggested dominant shifts are taking place involving the collapse of what had previously been seen as primordial, essentialist categories through which the identification process is structured. Whilst the new ideas are by no means universally accepted, they have moved from the doxic into the arena of discourse. This is particularly applicable to identities based on sex (gender), race (ethnicity-nationality) and estate (class). Although kinship and age-based identities are still rooted in notions of inevitable somatic constraints - mother love and frail old age are absolutes - even these are under assault. Although 'biology' is often 'blamed' for such constructs, in fact the roots of these somatic divisions lie far deeper in European thinking, and the freeing up of these categories is, on the face of it, empowering and enabling in terms of individual achievement.

Bender pointed out in 1993 that in current anthropology and archaeology ... 'the emphasis on the autonomy of the individual and on individual agency mirrors contemporary western politics', and the preceding discussion attempts to demonstrate this. Dobres and Robb in their important volume on agency go further and relate much of the work on identity construction in archaeology to the social locus of the academic archaeologists themselves. (Dobres & Robb 2000:

13). Others (Gero 2000) see agency theory as profoundly androcentric and culturally arrogant. Moore, in the same volume, warns stringently that:

'.... the problem of the relationship between structure and agency cannot be solved by making agents over active, over interventionist and over creative'. Moore 2000: 260.

Yet it is at least possible that the weakness of much archaeological interpretation in the past has arisen from the unconscious use of models in which reification of 'structures' has lead to such an exclusion of individual agency that conceptual processes such as diffusion come to be seen as natural processes akin to osmosis. It is time to look at some examples of archaeology in action.

b) Identity as a working concept.

Five contributions to archaeological discourse are to be briefly analysed and compared in this section. Four of these - Treherne's *The Warrior's Beauty: the masculine body and self identity in Bronze Age Europe* (1995), Meskell's *Intimate Archaeologies: the cases of Kha and Merit* (1998), Balint's consideration of ethnospecificity in Hungary (1989) and Friedman's model of the relationship of identity group size and nature to linear change over time (1989) – are located in academic publications and directed at a specialist audience. *Current Archaeology*, Jan 2002, is directed at a much wider and more general audience (circulation 18,000), although the sources of published letters shows that it is read by many who would identify themselves as professional archaeologists. In each case, the degree to which identity categories are used as taken-for-granted 'objects' or as transactional performative constructs will be assessed. The order in which they are considered is based on publication date.

Balint's stated intention was to examine the rich archaeological evidence from the Carpathian basin and neighbouring European steppes dated to the 4th -10th century for ethno specific indicators. He saw his approach as innovatory in the east European context, as he has set aside the Marxist evolutionary model of

history and is looking instead at 'ethnic groups'. Balint uses many 'peoples' terms freely and without questioning their reality, such as Slavs, Avars, Pechenegs and also imperial collective terms such as Rome, Byzantium, China, Khazaria and the Turkic empire. He also uses archaeological culture domain terms such as the 'so-called Bijelo Brdo culture' (Balint 1989: 191). Balint is unable to find material culture patterning which links with the folk groups, and retreats either into a suggestion that localised tribes are the 'real' unit of identity or that, in the case of the really hard to explain patterning, through asking the question '.... Was the burial with a horse *merely* a social phenomenon lacking any ethnic content?' (My italics). Embedded in this account is the use of class terms, such as when he refers to a new rich, popular (not aristocratic) culture developing and at another point to immigrant craftsmen. (Balint 1989: 190). He uses male/female categorisation as doxic.

Friedman's contribution in the form of a transferable model has a stated aim of addressing our own identity problems at the present time (1989). His collectivities are, like Balint's, political although he does point out that the 'social persona' will involve variables of sex, age, ethnicity and class as well. Friedman sees homogeneity of identity as a correlate of *civilisation*. The 'rise' of this standardised communal identity involves the assimilation of a multitude of small-scale collectivities and with the collapse (his term) of this leading to fragmentation and an enormous heterogeneity in identity: this is a cyclical model (Friedman 1989: 258). Thus he is interpreting 'cultural identity' as a form of resistance to 'civilisation' and as varying inversely with 'modernity'.

Treherne traces the long-term continuity of an aesthetically validated warrior elite in Europe, using archaeological evidence from *Kriegergrab*, poetry, myth and legend. The warrior identity is seen as continuously created and affirmed through a lifestyle centred on bodily performance, acted out through body wear, body care (grooming), and prowess in admired activities such as feasting, drinking and fighting, and validated by ideological constructs which were affirmed by the whole population: in short, highly performative. Treherne is, however, by definition looking at a biologically male group and seems to be assuming that these are young men. He also takes for granted that this constitutes an 'elite'

group, without any attempt to locate the warrior group in a wider context, although an interesting article by Bennett on *Belted Heroes and Bound Women* (Bennett 1997) shows the potential.

Meskeil's account concentrates on a double burial in the eastern necropolis at Deir el Medina in Egypt. Meskeil attempts to reconstruct the identities of the individuals buried here, using skeletal evidence, grave furnishings, the sequence and acts of the burial itself and understandings gained from textual information about beliefs at the time. Her main aim seems to be to access the sex-gender inequalities embedded in the burial process. The identity elements used by Meskeil involve age, class (wealth) and family locus as well as gender: the wider context of New Kingdom Egypt is taken for granted as 'known'.

Finally, *Current Archaeology* No 177 Vol XV: No 9 - January 2002 features a number of heavily edited articles about different excavations and research topics. All of the articles use the collective identity concepts unselfconsciously, the most frequent ones being culture domain/ethnic terms and class terms (elite, clients, peasants etc though not slaves or servants). The concepts of nuclear and extended families are used in the interpretation of a complex occupational site. There is, however, a conference report on a debate about the reality of the *Dobunni*, (p 373) in which the transitory and constructed nature of this identity label is emphasised.

At first sight, there seems little evidence here of the shifts discussed in Part a. The notion that identity for an individual is derived by top down membership (presumably ascribed by birth) of collectivities seems universal, although the scale varies. Even Meskeil's individuals are interpreted in terms of a taken-for-granted homogenous culture domain. Estate may no longer be relevant to modern lifestyles but it is assumed to be a valid interpretative tool for past peoples. Primordial dual gender is an absolute. In short, Moore need not worry about neglect of structure, although whether the structures being used are those important in the past or those which have been inculcated through living in late 20th century Britain is another matter. Yet the seeds of agency are there. Balint discusses tentatively the multiple alliances/ break offs between his only surviving

collectivities, the tribes. Friedman's model proposes times when identity is assigned through the structures of hegemony and times when identity is up for grabs, constantly and continuously created. Treherne emphasises the lived aspect of his warrior's self- and other definition, identity performed to the point of a beautiful death. Meskell demonstrates the agentive nature of burial, the inferences which can be made from material seen dynamically. Even *Current Archaeology* deconstructs the Dobunni, although the discussion seems to be in terms of material culture homogeneity.

What is needed is a theoretical framework which can be used for both agency and structure; where sameness and difference are equally important; where internal self-ascription and externally imposed assignation are seen as related; where monolithic enduring senses of identity are as valid as ephemeral renegotiated entrepreneurial ones; where the taken-for-granted is as potentially significant as the consciously performed and intentionally directed.

c) Identity or identification?

Archaeologists have long neglected the corporeal nature of lived experience. Even where the fetishism of artefact collecting and categorising, or feature identification and description, (Shanks and Tilley 1992:69-71) has been overcome, the tendency has been to interpret 'data' in terms of collective normative models of social structure. In these accounts, embodied individuals feature as passive cogs in a great system or machine. This approach can even be found in the work of anthropologists who have lived in the field with individuals interacting in what Bourdieu would call a *social field* (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 37-41). It perhaps reached its peak in the almost impenetrable abstractions of the structuralist school (e.g. in Levi Strauss 1963) and the semioticians (e.g. Barthes 1967) where what was important was, in Saussure's terms, *langue* rather than *parole*. (Saussure 1916).

In recent years, however, the thinking of Mauss, Douglas, Ricoeur, Foucault and others from the 1950s onwards has increasingly been used to focus attention on the active agency of the embodied individual in the continuous reproduction of what is called, with irony by post-modernists, 'society' or 'culture'. This is, in Bourdieu's words, the 'appropriation of the world by a body thus enabled to appropriate the world' (Bourdieu 1977: 89). Douglas' concept of the body as the natural symbol lying at the heart of cognitive systems for interpreting and acting in the world (Douglas 1966, 1970), Mauss' concept of the technology of the body (Mauss 1950), Ricoeur's concept of the body as the metaphorical foundation of a cosmological system made 'real' in the experience of the material world (Ricoeur 1976: 62-3) are increasingly used to reconstruct the embodied experience of people who live (or lived) in a symbolic world utterly unfamiliar to the observer. Thus Tilley in a recent book writes tellingly of the importance of corporeality not so much in terms of culture encoded on/in the body as in the extension of the body as metaphor into the spatial ordering of the perceived and created world. (Tilley 1999:37-49)

Some of the most interesting issues in this field in recent years have been raised by feminists uneasy with the dual oppositional categories beloved by structuralists and rooted in a taken-for-granted oppositional relationship between 'male' and 'female'. Whilst acknowledging the cultural potency of such constructions in, for example, Western European thinking, they explore gender constructions in other contexts. Strathern in particular has explored constructions in Melanesia, which question the absolute, and essentialist nature of dual sex – gender constructs (Strathern 1993), as has Broch Due with the Turkana (Broch Due 1993). Even for western European constructs of oppositional gender categories, Laqueur offers an interesting account of the development of an anatomical model of sexuality which was current for, he suggests, around 2,000 years up until the early 18th century in which 'maleness' and 'femaleness' were seen as associated with an inversion of the same basic sexual morphology. The male form was associated with reason and self discipline and the inverted female form associated with carnal emotions and lack of self-discipline; transformation from one form to the other through inappropriate behaviour was seen as possible and entirely natural, if not desirable (Laqueur 1990: 126-8). Other interesting

work has been carried out in relation to strategies to cope with pain, illness and approaching death (e.g. Csordas 1994) and even more interesting work on the unconscious use/creation of physical manifestations of illness in culturally defined ways. (E.g. Loe 1994)

For archaeologists, the main limitation with this focus on individual perception and embodied experience lies in its existential nature (Shilling 1993). Human beings are studied in their everyday life settings in all their complexities with the sensory body (especially the suffering body) and emotions integral to the analysis. (See for example Csordas 1994:269-290). The concept of a 'real world' is meaningless, 'culture' essentially arbitrary; all that exists for study is the individual's ongoing attempts to make sense, to endow meaning, cope with inevitable ambiguity and contradiction. Whilst fully acknowledging the importance and value of this approach, it is insufficient for those, like historians and archaeologists, concerned with continuities of practice and agency extending beyond the lifetime or the everyday contact world of individuals (Turner 1994: 27-47). What is needed is an approach which bridges the gap between the existential 'self as body in the world' approach and the remote abstractions of semiotic structuralism – in short, an approach that incorporates both *langue* and *parole*. At present the best-known contributor in this field has been Pierre Bourdieu.

Bourdieu, whilst in the late 1960s working with a structuralist model (see for example his famous analysis and synthesis of Kabyle symbolism in terms of clusters of oppositional dualities rooted in male – female categorisation [Bourdieu 1977:157]) has shifted over the years to a more flexible model. Whilst emphasising the creativity of the individual who improvises strategies continuously and largely unconsciously in day to day existence, he sees underlying this a complex of infrastructural dispositions which have been inculcated in childhood so profoundly that they structure improvisation in certain ways which are shared by others of similar experience. These acquired dispositions appear completely natural and are taken-for-granted, instantiated in every seemingly trivial aspect of the body: more conscious strategies derived from them are common sense applications of *practical logic*. Bourdieu uses the

concept of *bodily hexis* (Bourdieu 1977:93-4) to express this coming together of unique bodies and shared culture, so that the body is a mnemonic of the culture: the concept of the *Habitus* (Bourdieu 1977:77-9, 1990, Bourdieu & Wacquant 1993) encapsulates the ‘transposable durable dispositions’, which both structure and are structured by the experience of the individual.

It is not difficult to criticise Bourdieu’s approach. He writes in what Jenkins calls an obscure and intimidatory style (Jenkins 1992: 9-10), with much repetition and circularity; this could however be attributed to his wariness about what he calls *synoptic illusion*, the deceptiveness of the simplified linear diagram. More seriously, whilst constantly emphasising the need for a reflexive approach – what he calls *participant objectivation* (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:33) - he often seems to take for granted his own ability to see (objective) reality against which he can evaluate the (subjective) perceptions of reality of his subjects. The very term *misrecognition*, which he uses so effectively to describe the masking of inequalities through symbolic manipulation (*symbolic violence*), implies that he alone recognises ‘reality’. Bourdieu, in short, is very much a product of a particular historical context and place. Yet it is hard to find another accessible thinker who merges the practical and the theoretical so emphatically (in his words, ‘theory without empirical work is empty; empirical work without theory is blind’: Bourdieu 1988b: 774-5) and who allows for agency and structure, for change and for continuity in a dynamic and flexible framework. As Jenkins says, Bourdieu is ‘good to think with’. (Jenkins 1992:176)

One of Bourdieu’s basic assumptions is that the process of classifying and categorising is a fundamental human characteristic. He sees the male/female classification based on reproductive biological criteria as being an absolute, enhanced and made thoroughly visible through a multiplicity of embodied codes of gait, dress, gesture, and so on. This archetypal duality is the starting point and foundation for the whole symbolic edifice, which constitutes ‘culture’ and structures practice. He does not discuss classifications based on age - for him, perhaps, ‘children’ and ‘old people’ are as invisible as they are to other ethnographers of the old school - but I would suspect that he also sees such categories as primordial.

He is less absolutist about stratified social categories. The *Distinctions of Taste*, (Bourdieu 1984) was recently cited as one of the 10 most important sociological works of the 20th century (see Bourdieu's obituary in Guardian 28.01.2002.). In this, he examines the embodiment of social class in modern France, in terms of deeply embedded dispositions generating *schemes of action* in relation to eating habits, dress, leisure tastes, gestures, aesthetics of the body etc, accounting for the reproduction of social class inequality in the face of a popular belief in transformational social mobility and increasing equality. I would argue that the em-bodiment of social hierarchy is even more deeply embedded than this in North European culture, and that notions of fundamental biological difference underpin much of the naturalisation of inequality. 'Nobility' has been associated for a long time with bodily criteria such as beauty, bearing, complexion, sensitivity and physical skill in defined high status activities, all seen as inherited qualities characteristic of 'blue blood'. An abundance of European folklore tells of the instant recognisability of high birth even in one whose circumstances denote otherwise. (Goose girls, and princesses and peas) (Leach 1950, Jobes 1962) The Bayeux Tapestry depicts clear physiological difference between 'Normans' and 'Saxons' (quite apart from marked differences in bodily presentation, posture etc), a naturalisation of difference perpetuated into recent times by the claim that Saxons were dolichocephalic and Normans brachycephalic. (Skeletal evidence has failed to show any such differences: Stevenson 1998:57). That these largely unconscious classificatory dispositions became effortlessly formalised into scientific theories of racial hierarchy – absolute, untransformable and therefore divinely ordained by God or Nature - by the 20th century goes without saying. Furthermore, the position of those whose bodies are 'unclassifiable' becomes extremely dangerous, ambivalent – the corporeal 'norm' is sacred, right, and infanticide and euthanasia become a logical and inevitable outcome.

Bourdieu is emphatic that all interaction is understandable only in terms of relative power – he is fond of games analogies, seeing social space as an arena in which constant struggle takes place between individuals occupying socially defined positions over the access to and use of what he defines as *capital*

(*economic, social, cultural, symbolic*) (Bourdieu 1977: 171-83). In the North European context, given the profound classificatory importance of bodily difference, the concepts of *em-bodiment* and *bodily hexis* take on a potency which adds weight to seeing the body as a cultural mnemonic, inscribed or encoded with nonverbal signifiers. Judgements based on ‘inherited’ bodily criteria, especially where surface differences are linked to differences in aptitude, temperament, intelligence, tastes etc, lead to birth-body being experienced as the most powerful determinant of identity. This can be construed either as a burden (to be set aside and denied in favour of the more transformable soul, spirit or intellect) or as an asset, which can be strategically marketed and/or transformed in a more symbolically powerful image. The sumptuary laws of the later Middle Ages in England (Pickering: Sumptuary Regulations 1363) show how subversive such transformations can appear. (See Chapter 3)

Anthropologists can attempt to make an ‘imaginative leap into the shoes of the objects of study’, to quote Jenkins’ metaphor (Jenkins 1992: 50) and gain an empathic understanding of other people’s meaningful worlds through direct participation in a seamless web of symbolic interaction. Broch Due’s impressive account of sexuality amongst the Turkana draws not only on the organisation and construction of the material world and the movement of bodies within this, but on song, laughter, tears and touch as part of being-in-the-world (Broch Due 1993). Archaeologists have only material culture from which to infer the ways of meaning which structured and were structured by the makers/ users/ modifiers/ discarders of these objects, whether these are artefacts, buildings, landscape interventions or bodily remains.

d) My Research: the question and the parameters.

The research question guiding this project involves the exploration of the ways in which individuals embody a sense of who they are and how these can shift and change over time (short and long term) or remain fixed and unchanging for periods longer than a lifetime. The relationship between these and other variables in the wider context is obviously critical to understanding. In the broadest terms,

such an investigation will shed light on those rather taken-for-granted processes lumped together as ‘diffusion’ and ‘innovation’. This project has, however, primarily been conceived as historically specific, rather than cross-cultural. The scale of the project in terms of space, time span and quantity of resources has had to be large enough to permit detailed comparison of embodied agentive material activity based on substantial information, yet small enough to be manageable in terms of the set research period. Furthermore, the boundaries of the research should not be set according to pre-assumptions about bounded culture domains or chronological phases. The existence and nature of such categorising, however, both past and modern and from different viewpoints will have to be fully incorporated.

The research domain selected is:

Time span: AD 800 –1200. (8 lifetimes span)

Spatial area: Europe north of the Alps and west of the Volga-Dnepr line. (Time constraints lead to a tighter focus on NW Europe, north of the Alps, west of the Oder with the wider area brought in through secondary sources).

For this domain, contextual richness is possible, without too much of a burden from documentary evidence and ‘factual’ history. Although a number of modern ethnic and hegemonic stereotypes dominate the popular history of this period, most notably the ‘Anglo-Saxons’, ‘Vikings’ and ‘Normans’, the mythological aspects of these are perhaps more evident than is the case in the historical narratives of more recent times. Thus the uncritical use of grouping concepts is less likely, though possibly unavoidable at times. The chief danger of using such a relatively familiar domain is that pre-assumptions about other structures of meaning may be made, for example about the signification of social status or the nature of ‘women’s work’.

The dynamics of identification strategies are explored through rigorous examination of closely embodied material remains. For my research period, footwear, combs, knives and body ornaments are the only abundant primary

sources for the cultural mnemonic of the body in Northern Europe a thousand years ago. The justification for the selection of footwear will be spelled out at the beginning of the next chapter but for now its sheer abundance and unarguable relationship to the body makes it a sound choice. This prediction has been fully confirmed during the project. Wider contextualisation, except in the few cases of dressed burial from this period, has to take place through the use of iconographic representations of the human body.

Final Comments

Finally, and very importantly, the research itself involves continuous feedback between hands-on and discourse: recursivity is consciously sought. The research follows hermeneutic principles of continuous interpretative modification and shift. Every opportunity is taken to engage in discourse with interested others – medievalists, archivists, shoe specialists, field archaeologists, museum curators, enactors, shoemakers, and also non-specialists who are interested in such evocative and personalised artefacts. This staged approach obviously raises many questions concerned with rigour and great care is taken to ensure that a central integrity is preserved whilst allowing for changing interpretations and priorities. This is dealt with fully in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2

‘Footwear’ as a situated construct in archaeological reality.

Introduction: The case for performativity through footwear

In the previous chapter, the slipperiness of the ‘identity’ concept - uniqueness or sameness – and its rootedness in embodied interaction was discussed, and parameters laid down for the research. At the end of the chapter, the potential inherent in using variability in footwear to investigate the dynamic performative nature of identity in action was raised.

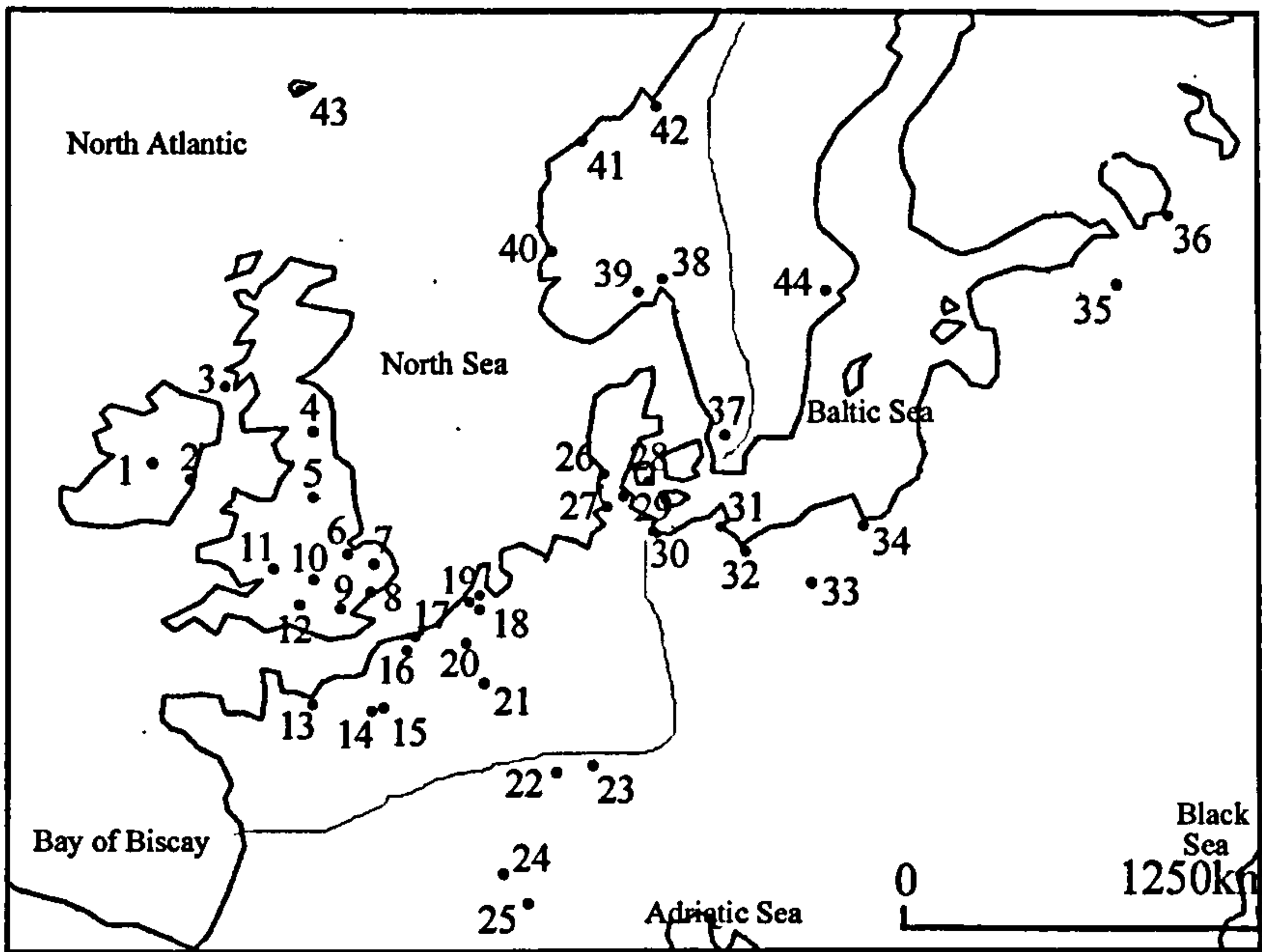
Performativity, as used by Butler, involves reiterative action as lived culture (Butler 1993: 3-15). As a term, it encapsulates Bourdieu’s multiplicity of bodily trivia, where every variation in ‘performance’, whether conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional, self or other directed, is contextually meaningful. Goffman’s concept of *impression management* (see chapter 4) belongs to the same analytical model. Dressed burial is the commonest way in which archaeologists investigate the performativity of the body (see Chapman 2000: 169-194 for a recent example), along with representational iconography, but both of these have their contextual limitations. Only body wear itself gives clues to what living people did reiteratively, and because of the organic and taphonomically vulnerable nature of most clothing, very little actually survives in Northern Europe. Only footwear made from leather survives in any kind of quantity, and that only in anaerobic conditions. Through a careful comparative study of change and continuity in what living people actually wore on their feet, around a thousand years ago in Northern Europe it should be possible to some extent to trace the network of identification constructs that people were using in their everyday lives.

In this chapter, work done on footwear from Mid-Medieval Northern Europe will be surveyed and evaluated. At this stage, the emphasis will not be on the content of the published studies but on the approach and its underlying implicit and explicit theoretical assumptions. It is likely that many of the points made will be applicable to other specialist domains in so-called finds work. The discussion will concentrate first on the questions of typology, then on comparative work, chronologies used (and not used) and finally questions of context. Fig 2.1 shows the distribution of known sources of Mid-Medieval footwear assemblages, according mainly to published sources but also where unpublished assemblages are held in archives. The assemblages include over 4,000 recognisable footwear items and a huge number of fragments of bulk leather (unrecognisable worked fragments, offcuts and hide fragments). Publications used for this area are in English, French, German, Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, Danish, Polish, Russian and Flemish and represent work carried out within the frameworks of differing European archaeological domains with different doxa, orthodoxies and discursive agendas. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the issues raised and evaluate the usefulness of this material to the research project.

a) Classification as an archaeological practice

Any glance at reconstructions of the past based on material evidence will show a wide range of classificatory practices. The whole, almost pre-theoretical, concept of 'Finds' is based on a classification of the substance of excavated material into *signifying* (to be retained) and *meaningless* (to be discarded on the spoil heap). The boundaries of this classification have constantly been redefined over the years, from the days of 'treasure hunters' to the present 'good practice' of fine extraction of such micro-signifiers as pollen grains and chemical residues.

Figure 2.1. Footwear producing sites used in the research.



- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Irish bogs | 17. Middelburg | 33. Gniew |
| 2. Dublin | 18. Duurstede | 34. Gdansk |
| 3. Iona | 19. Various Dutch | 35. Novgorod |
| 4. Durham | 20. Duisburg | 36. Staraya Ladoga |
| 5. York | 21. Haus Meer | 37. Lund |
| 6. King's Lynn | 22. Basel | 38. Oslo |
| 7. Norwich | 23. Lake Constanz | 39. Oseberg |
| 8. Sutton Hoo | 24. Paladru | 40. Bergen |
| 9. London | 25. Moutiers Grand-Val | 41. Borgund |
| 10. Oxford | 26. Ribe | 42. Trondheim |
| 11. Gloucester | 27. Elisenhof | 43. Faeroes |
| 12. Winchester | 28. Svendborg | 44. Stockholm |
| 13. Rouen | 29. Hedeby/ Danish bogs | |
| 14. Paris (St Denis) | 30. Lubeck | |
| 15. Chelles | 31. Wolin | |
| 16. Bruges | 32. Stettin | |

The procedure whereby ‘finds’ are placed in labelled trays for removal to store, leaving ‘features’ to be mapped and sectioned does seem to have been standard in Northern Europe for at least the last 50 years, and is now a completely taken-for-granted procedure. In theory, ‘finds’ can be reunited with ‘features’ at any stage after excavation though the use of records.

Hodder, in his on-going polemic about the increasing separation of the theory of archaeology from field practice (Hodder 1991, 1995, 1999) has emphasised the inherent dishonesty of this supposedly objective separation out of ‘finds’ for later post-excavation analysis involving reunification with context. Hodder’s criticisms, which I find very timely, will be considered more fully later in the chapter in the section on ‘context’ as a taken-for-granted, almost pre-theoretical concept in modern archaeology. For now, let us accept the class of ‘Finds’ as a separate and ‘real’ entity. The objects grouped under this label are, in all the practices I have seen in Northern Europe, physically separated out for storage in archives, with closely guarded access negotiable only through the power structures of the local ‘owners’. A selection of the objects may be displayed behind glass in a museum, and/or feature in a publication. The basis for this selection (and investment of resources) is rarely stated and may have elements of aesthetic appeal, heritage affirmation, market appeal and even mystification of the audience through display of esoteric detail. The ‘reality’ of Finds is further confirmed by job descriptions such as ‘Head of Finds’ or ‘Archive Manager’ and a widespread career structure involving ‘specialists’ whose reputation rests upon expertise (often unique) in a particular subset of ‘Finds’.

The definition of subsets is rooted in historical practice. (Adams & Adams 1991: 265-77) Almost universally, the material itself has become the primary arbiter of difference or similarity, so that all ceramics are stored together and an appropriate target for specialism, likewise wooden artefacts or leather ones. A second major label is that of chronological period such as ‘Roman’ or ‘Iron Age’, although this is often secondary to separation out by multi-period excavational site. Beyond this is a separation into functional sets – leather is commonly divided into scabbards and sheaths, belts, horse equipment, footwear and so on. So far, the classification could be justified on common sense grounds, in terms of storage

and conservation, and the categories are sufficiently well-bounded to be mutually exclusive except of course in the case of artefacts which have inconsiderately been made from more than one raw material e.g. iron nailed leather footwear. These classes of artefacts already bounded by raw material, chronological and functional boundaries and situated in a complex symbolic context involving power relationships in 'archaeology' then become subject to 'etymologising'.

Spaulding, a prominent American archaeologist, wrote in 1953 that '..... classification into types is a process of discovery of combinations of attributes favoured by the makers of artefacts'. (Spaulding 1953: 305) This was an articulation of the belief that there was a direct relationship between what people made and what they thought i.e. that the artefacts were made according to a mental template. (Adams and Adams 1991: 282) This concept will be returned to in chapter 4, where 'Middle Range Theory' will be fully discussed and evaluated for its contribution to this research. For now, its implications for what have come to be known as etic types (first used as a term by Pike: Pike 1954) must be considered. The assumption here is that material culture will show patterning according to meaningful action by the past makers and users. Although from the 1930s to 1950s used mainly to identify large-scale spatial and chronological boundaries between cultures, (as by Holmes, Kidder and McKern in the USA, see Renfrew & Bahn 1991:32) this approach has potential for considering small-scale variation (for example in Hill & Evans 1972). In Northern Europe, a model developed and popularised most famously by Childe (Gordon Childe 1956) involving the intuitive 'expert' identification of types based on similarity/difference constructions was almost universally used (e.g. for the identification of waves of Celtic invasions to Britain or tracing the migrations of Germanic tribes across the North European plain). This was never seen as an absolute but nevertheless was used by German expansionists to justify cultural hegemony (Veit 1989) and many of the typological constructs have passed into the doxa as absolutes e.g. Samian ware, hand axes, square headed brooches.

The New Archaeologists of the 60s and the post-processualists of the 80s and 90s do not seem to have made much impression on these expert intuitive typological constructs. The New Archaeologists used new technologies of data

processing to develop classifications based on accurate measurements and explored hypotheses through examination of structured variation. They used theoretical assumptions about the cross-cultural validity of a systems model based on the idea of human activity being understandable in terms of adaptation to changing environments in order to maintain balance (discussed thoroughly in for example Dunnell 1986 and Hill & Evans 1972). This model has become heavily modified in terms of chaos theory (see Chapter 3) or abandoned in favour of a contingency model involving symbolic interaction and the return to historically continually enacted and lived instantiation of reality (see Chapter 1). Nevertheless, the old types survive, as any inspections of publications other than the overtly theoretical-academic will show. The latest volume of *Medieval Archaeology* (Vol XLV 2001) is awash with taken for granted typological constructs and even in a recently published volume on agency theory, (Dobres and Robb 2000) writers use archaic typological constructs in their interpretations – see Chapman on Tisza pottery, for example, or Sinclair on Solutrean lithics. Shennan has referred to the disorganised mass of archaeological evidence (Shennan 1988: 6) and it would be unrealistic to expect individuals to set aside such constructs, canonised by historical use and associated with a web of contextual information, which enable ‘order’ to be imposed on the ‘chaos’. Yet the dangers of unreflexive use of typologies in interpretation are obvious. What, then, is the situation as far as footwear is concerned?

Leather artefacts are not a high-profile subject in archaeology. This must partly be due to the fact that leather only survives where specific taphonomic circumstances are found i.e. waterlogged or other anaerobic conditions. These were rarely prevalent on the kinds of sites selected for research-justified excavations before the early 1950s – who would chose to excavate a waterlogged site? The rapid deterioration of exposed leather as it dried out was an additional problem, although not insuperable as the well-preserved Irish bog shoes, found during 19th century peat digging, witness (Fig 2.2). Roman footwear, perhaps because of its elaborate construction and distinctive styling, has received some attention and the vast majority of museums in the former Roman Empire have some footwear of the period on display. Medieval footwear, however, has been less attractive and Thomas describes how only the intervention of a single

individual, J. Shelton, between 1927 and 1960 in the Coventry area prevented the casting aside as ‘rubbish’ of large quantities of medieval shoes. (Thomas 1980). The excavation of wet sites such as Hedeby and Novgorod in the 1950s-60s and the rise in urban rescue digs from the 70s onwards, however, has resulted in the excavation of huge quantities of leather artefacts and modern conservation techniques have permitted rapid processing. Medieval footwear seems at last to have been assigned signifying potential and even small fragments and offcuts have been preserved although the quality of the conservation is very variable (personal observation).

Figure 2.2. 19th century conservation.

Footwear displayed in the National Museum, Dublin

Image removed due to third party copyright

A physical archive, then, exists. How has it been used? The vast majority of published accounts relating to footwear and other leather artefacts feature them as a ‘descriptive’ category in the ‘Small Finds’ section of site reports. Where the number of items is less than around 30, each item tends to be separately listed, with fragments associated if they are considered to belong to the same shoe (e.g. Ayers & Murphy 1983: Norwich, Groenman van Waateringe 1976: Duurstede, Goudge 1979: Gloucester). Large fragments are drawn. The descriptions involve the use of a specific language using, in English, terms such as vamp, quarters and sole which do seem to be directly translatable into other European languages, using a standardised diagram. The origins of this linguistic model of the ‘significant’ elements of a shoe are uncertain (probably shoe manufacturing) but

the technical language does almost immediately put the descriptions beyond the understanding of almost all readers: a mystique is already being created.

Larger assemblages (and when leather survives, it survives in large quantities, demonstrating the importance of it as a raw material in the past as well as now) are more problematic. Some, notably York, Dublin and St Denis, have never been published although preparations are 'in hand' and have been for years (O'Rourke for Dublin, Carlisle for York, Montembault for St Denis). Some specialist volumes do exist, although, until now, most of these have been site specific. For the period designated for this research, the publication scene is dominated by a small number of specialists i.e. Professor Willy Groenman van Waateringe, who has been publishing footwear reports for the last 30 years, and a small group of Scandinavian archaeologists (Blomqvist, Schia, Larsen). The work of Olaf Goubitz, although mainly concerned with the later medieval period (12th century onwards) is influential. The authors have offered typological constructions, as have a few of the less specialist writers buried in Small Finds sections (e.g. Pritchard 1991 (London) and Tweddle 1986(York)).

All of these primitive typologies are of an empirically based 'lump and split' variety. The criteria on which the footwear is being grouped and differentiated are clearly stated, and in all of the above cases relates to fastening types and height of the footwear (slipper/ ankle boot/ boot). These are used as common-sense categories without need for justification: they are, I think, being assumed to be significant and conscious emic types. The frequency of these types is very rarely mentioned; the hidden assumption being that each type is of equal importance. Groenman Van Waateringe, the main authority, sometimes gives demographic interpretation based on shoe size (1978, 1988b) and has attempted to measure and interpret wear patterns of soles in terms of gait (1988a, 1988b) but interpretations based on relative frequency and rates of change are missing. Indeed, chronological sequence plays no part in these site-specific typologies, and a single example of a 'type', which could be an exotic, is given as much weight as a 'type' with 60% frequency throughout the life of the site.

The main exception to this is Schia's account of footwear finds in Oslo (1977, 1987). Here Schia is using footwear typological sequences in a seriation process to date and match fire level sequences in Oslo. For the seriation work, Schia does not try to force the immensely variable footwear into neat typological classes but uses characteristics, which vary with some degree of independence over time. Elsewhere in his substantial publications, he does offer a complex typology but reluctantly – he saw this a denial of rich variability (Larsen, pers comm.). Larsen himself, in his account of the Bryggen footwear, felt himself forced by the sheer quantity of the finds into focussing on a small spatial area (Gullskoen) and only a few variables (Larsen 1992). Like Schia, however, he does attempt to look at and interpret in context shifts over time and use the footwear to examine historical assumptions about the development of Bergen.

Apart, then, from a few basic 'types' such as that of the one piece shoe/ turnshoe/ welted shoe, seen usually in terms of a chronological developmental sequence, 'footwear' as an artefact class does not seem to have generated absolutist typologies. A substantial recent (2001) publication by Goubitz does, however, show an attempt to establish to a wider audience a classification of North European medieval footwear. During my visits to many European archives, I have found an expectation from archivists that I will produce a definitive typology. A similar pressure has come from field archaeologists wanting a chronological typology, which can be used for dating for what is often a difficult period due to the shortage of pottery indicators. Clearly, this is an issue on which decisions must be taken at the end of this chapter.

Figure 2.3. Schia's seriation plot using footwear variation (down the side) and fire levels (along the top) in Oslo.
From Schia 1987: 405

Image removed due to third party copyright

b) Context widening: comparative work by finds specialists.

After finds specialists have ‘described’ and typologised a site’s assemblage, they usually briefly make comparisons with assemblages from spatially and chronologically neighbouring assemblages. This, as far as I have seen, is always a search for sameness, the drawing of parallels. Thus as Ayers and Murphy say in their account of footwear finds at Whitefriars Street, ‘they all lacked heel stiffeners in common with similar shoes from York’ (Ayers and Murphy 1983:25). Such searches do seem to be carried out very conscientiously and a footwear specialist, like other finds specialists, is surrounded by reference volumes of the kind outlined in Part a. The appropriateness of the approach is taken for granted and lies at the heart of successful individual careers. Very little attention has been given to the dangers of finds work of this relatively isolated nature, although Hodder touches upon it, finding a solution in the onsite full involvement of specialists (Hodder 1999:96-97). The footwear specialist area, however, is replete with examples and problems do arise.

Firstly, there is the obvious problem to do with limited publication - some major assemblages, as stated above, remain unpublished and indeed, uncatalogued in any way. Publication language diversity complicates this further and I suspect many readers tend to look mainly at the pictures. Furthermore, where site-specific publications are not contained in journals, they tend to go out of print and become inaccessible except through intricate personal networks. The outcome of this is that the small number of accessible texts is over used and become definitive tomes. The most important such publication for the period and place being researched is Margarethe Hald’s *Primitive Shoes*, published in 1972 (See below).

Secondly, many archives are difficult to access, some as jealously guarded as Brunhilde’s rock. For some large assemblages, furthermore, reliable sampling is impossible as, quite often, no one knows how many items are represented in the assemblage, and bulk sampling is prevented through denial of access to the stored material - ‘just tell me what you want’. These difficulties will be more fully discussed in chapter 5 when the procedures to be used in this research are definitively laid out, but it would seem that experience with footwear, other than

the actual assemblage under study for the site being reported upon, is gained through brief visits and quick scans to see if there is anything 'of interest' - the Finds equivalent of what Orton calls grab sampling (Orton 2000:2). These are not trivial points of methodology but lie at the foundation of existing interpretations constructed upon footwear variability.

A classic case of what could be seen as a kind of stochastic drift has arisen from over use of the Hald book mentioned above. This is a modest and, for its time, revolutionary book which attempted to interpret footwear variability in Northern Europe using an ethno-archaeological approach. The book consists of several chapters of detailed description of footwear finds from Danish bogs (undatable, of course), personally recorded by Hald. She also had first-hand access to the footwear from Staraya Ladoga (dated 9th -10th century) archived at the Hermitage, Leningrad. She ranges across a scatter of examples from Northern Europe, based on published evidence or on 'pers. comm.' and argues for certain attributes (particular forms of variables) indicating Scandinavian settlement across northern Europe.

Hald's arguments are slender, and there is a major disjunction between minutely detailed descriptions of bog footwear examples and sweeping generalisations but I suspect she did not intend to do more than start a discussion. Her hypothesis, however, regularly appears as 'fact' in footwear discussions, regardless of the enormously increased amount of evidence from excavations since 1972. It is built into a publication in preparation for publication on the Dublin footwear (O'Rourke in prep) and the attribute she saw as the chief ethnic-specific indicator for Scandinavian identity was very recently offered as evidence of identification emulation signalling in York (Mould 2002). These are, however, arguable interpretations. More serious has been the incorporation in print of straightforward error through misreading of Hald. An account of the well-preserved assemblage from Elisenhof, on the Eider estuary, dated to the 8th -9th centuries and based by Hald on 'pers comm.', has become steadily distorted over time so that a recent publication of a detailed account of footwear in Scandinavia stated without reservation facts about the Elisenhof assemblage which are, in the most straightforward sense, wrong.



Every archaeologist has similar tales to tell of apparently reliable ‘simple descriptive’ information with a respectable genealogy turning out to be based on a chimera. There are no easy answers to this problem, especially when time constraints exist, but this is another issue that needs firm addressing at the end of this chapter.

c) Questions of Chronology

At the heart of archaeological practice lies a concern with sequence over time, whether on a micro-scale as in Chapman’s burial sequence in Hungary (Chapman 2000) or on a macro scale in Friedman’s rise and fall cycle outlined in Chapter 1, part b. The problems involved in time scales will be discussed further in the next chapter. At this stage, the chronological frameworks used by footwear specialists will be discussed.

A pre-assumption of this research project was that only ‘scientific’ dating evidence would be acceptable. This assumed the conduct of excavation using principles of stratification to give sequence, pinned down by application of techniques such as dendrochronology, carbon 14 dating, thermoluminescence and archaeo-magnetometry. My intention was to avoid assemblages where dating depended wholly on typologies, and especially where these rested upon an intuitive typing of the footwear itself. The relative recency of the archaeology would, I believed, mean that establishing reasonable synchronicity across Northern Europe would be possible, especially given that the conditions that support the survival of leather also support the survival of timber datable through dendrochronology.

In many of the published accounts, the footwear is so far from the explanation of sequencing that restoring the link is very laborious. In the case of short-lived sites such as Charavines in Burgundy (excavated early 70s onwards), closely dated with reliable environmental evidence to AD 1002-1040, the criteria for reliable dating are met (Colardelle & Verdel 1993). Elsewhere, however, the situation is

much more elusive. Very often, e.g. in Grew & De Neergaard 1988 (London) and Leciejewicz 1972 (Stettin), footwear drawings are arranged in a linear chronological diagram. The problem here is that the criteria for date placement are not specified, and there is a strong possibility that the variability of the footwear itself is being used in an un-stated, semi-intuitive seriation procedure. Given the lack of any form whatsoever of exhaustive reference material on the lines, say, of Myres' Anglo Saxon pottery corpus (Myres 1977) such seriation is bound to be insecure. Thus a distinctive item identified confidently by Carver as 10th century back in the 1970s at Durham turned out on inspection of the actual site notes to have been designated as such on the basis of 'someone says' (sic). Carver was keen to identify solid evidence for 10th century settlement at Durham. A number of other examples of circular reasoning (where dating appears to be derived from context but is in fact derived from intuitive typologising of the footwear) could be given. Given time constraints and the scope of the research, however, setting a target of scrutinising the detailed site records for all assemblages is unrealistic.

A further even more depressing problem is that the method of excavation used, especially in German and Russian archaeological traditions, means that only those intimately involved with overseeing the act of excavation, e.g. the Director, are able to interpret the codings of the finds in the archives and relate them to dates. When that person is not available – dead, for example, - the archived finds become undateable inside the broad framework for the site, except on typological grounds. Unfortunately, this situation applies to the richest footwear site of all in Mid-Medieval Northern Europe, i.e. Hedeby covering a 200-year period, as well as a number of smaller continental assemblages. Although it would be possible to go through the motions of seriation for Hedeby given that excellent footwear assemblages are available for neighbouring sites which immediately precede and follow Hedeby without overlap (Elisenhof and Schleswig), the outcome would be of no use to me (although much appreciated and requested by the staff at Schloss Gottorf).

At the opposite extreme, the closest dated assemblages are those from York Coppergate (excavated in the 1970s) (unpublished) and Winchester (excavated

1960s-70s) (Biddle 1990) using single context method (of which more in the next and last section). A typical assigned date from these assemblages is AD 970-990. This seems to be arrived at through minute observation of stratification, pinned down by typologies: given the dates of the excavations, the above-mentioned scientific techniques were insufficiently well developed to give such precision reliably in themselves. This precision is further undermined by the fact that nearly all footwear finds are found in rubbish pits or other kinds of occupational dumps such as ditches and cesspits, which are notoriously difficult to sequence in complex urban settings.

In short, if I adhered to my original intention, there would be very little left to work with. Compromise is clearly called for, and the nature of this will be made clear at the end of the chapter.

d) Questions of context.

Finally, the fraught question of context must be raised. This has become, I think, the most taken-for-granted embedded term in the minds of present archaeologists: no modern archaeologist would argue with the need for interpretation in context and in the UK single-context excavation has become routinised, naturalised as 'right' practice. A common sense criticism of the demand at all times for full understanding and knowledge of context before interpretation is that this is nonsense: if all is known, why bother to examine pottery sherds? Yet there are much deeper problems coming from the sacralisation of this term, the assumption that 'context' is some kind of 'given', with an absolute existence, which must be 'discovered'. Hodder has for some time emphasised the hermeneutic nature of the archaeological process, the recursive and reflexive nature of discovery, whereby interpretation channels practice and practice channels interpretation. The sharing and mutual critique of thought and practice enables a 'best estimate' interpretation at any one time but this is fully accepted as transient and subjective – the 'present past'. In Hodder's words, interpretation begins at the edge of the trowel (Hodder 1995: 92), but, of course, it begins much earlier with perceptions gained from texts, museum displays, media images and so on, perceptions rooted

in structuration and ideology. Certainly the identification of an excavational 'single context', which is by definition homogenous in significant ways and differentiated from surrounding areas, is a major interpretative act: to the inexperienced observer it can seem mystical revelation. The process is itself structured by what are pre-theoretical common-sense constructs such as ditch, rubbish pit, house floor, and posthole.

The difficulties in unreflective use of this powerful concept increase when a scale wider than an archaeological site is being considered. Context is a relative term – at its widest it implies the whole of human culture since it began, a context not unknown as a framework for interpretation (see Chapter 3). Whatever bounds are being used for the context, these are constructs, however 'natural' they may seem. Indeed, the most naturalised boundaries such as modern national boundaries (spatial) or end of the Roman Empire (chronological) are often the most interesting when treated reflexively and deconstructed. (see for example Jones 1997: 134), leading to fresh insight into assumptions and almost unconscious, naturalised theorising about what is significant and what is trivial. Moore, in her impressive critique of the absence of structure from agentive interpretations, states as taken-for-granted that most acts of agents are not significant and that to see them as such is to drown in welter of trivia (Moore 2000: 260). Bourdieu, though, shows very clearly, in my view, that no act is inherently trivial in interactive terms, that 'structure' is lived and created through countless trivial acts and that 'significance' is a subjective assignation based on hindsight and personal agenda. This theme will be developed much more fully in the next chapter on the 'historical context' of the research domain, i.e. Mid-Medieval Northern Europe. For now, however, the use of the concept in the existing footwear studies needs to be considered.

Finds listed in accounts based on single-context excavation methods are relatively easily reunited with their contexts, although it is left to the reader to make the effort. In some cases, e.g. Biddle 1990 for Winchester, concordance lists enable full re-association of items. Yet what is missing is the actual relationship of what are now isolated pieces to each other in the ground. A few studies e.g. Krause 1992 (Duisburg) and East 1983 (Sutton Hoo), include the

footwear in situ on sections and photographs but identifying the actual items with the conserved, numbered, bundled, packaged and boxed 'finds' is impossible. For publications based on large open area or trench-by-trench layer excavation, the small-scale context is almost unfathomable without the support of an individual directly involved in the excavation itself. (See above under chronology).

Site reports, within which most footwear accounts are contained, have their own spatio-temporal contextual boundaries imposed by the chronological span covered and the spatial area occupied, but even the most 'descriptive' of urban rescue reports cannot avoid bringing in neighbouring areas and contemporary developments through the comparative work and use of typologies discussed earlier. These are often, however, very fragmentary: parallels with footwear attributes tend to stand alone, and are not seen in the context of the body. Indeed, publications intended for a general readership, e.g. Elsner 1989 on Haithabu/Hedeby, and many child-targeted illustrated books, often demonstrate a far more existentialist perspective than the 'archaeological' documents.

Here two publications in which footwear variability is placed and interpreted in its wider context should be highlighted. Larsen's Gullskoen account (1992) starts with a highly structured analysis of variation in a large assemblage, which spans 12th - 16th centuries. The most interesting section is where he examines the evidence for the historical tradition that shoemaking in Bergen was under the control of an all-male German immigrant community. For the 12th century at least, this taken-for-granted belief seemed to be contradicted by the evidence of the footwear which included that of small children. Grew and De Neergaard in their Museum of London publication produced a guide to footwear variation in 12th - 15th century London which did not retreat into typologising ritual but charted change and frequency, along with inter site contemporary difference within the city (Grew & De Neergaard 1988). They commented on what this seemed to suggest about demography and relative wealth, and made connections between the actual footwear and that shown in contemporary representations. Although the interpretation was at a simple level – this was a book intended for a general readership, and has sold well - the authors did attempt an integrated and contextualised approach which has ensured that this book on footwear, at least,

has not gone out of print – indeed, a new edition has just been published. (Grew & De Neergaard 2002)

I have not come across any published material that interprets footwear variability contextually in terms of its place as a solid metaphor (Tilley 1999: 36-76) in the cognitive and perceptual world of the inhabitants of Mid-Medieval Northern Europe. This is interesting, as a strong case can be made for the potency and polysemous operation of footwear as a symbol in North European culture.

e) Evaluation and Ways Forward

The discussions above may seem unduly pessimistic. Apparently, footwear features in publications as a specialised, almost unintelligible ‘finds’ category based on traditional models of intuitively based type classes – lump and split by expert eye. Change over time is seen in terms of technique – the use of a rand etc - the implicit assumption seeming to be one of charting steady rational improvements as time goes by. Mould’s suggestions about emulation of ‘Viking’ styles in 10th century York, although based on incomplete empirical evidence, is perhaps the only example of an attempt to see variation in terms of signalling, to relate variation and transformation to a specific historic-social context. (Mould 2002). There has been no attempt to coordinate variation systematically over space and time – what does exist (Hald’s 1972 book and Larsen’s brief chapter in his Gullskoen account) are largely based on hearsay and publications which are themselves highly selective. There are severe problems with reliable dating,

Clearly, this material on its own is not adequate for my needs. Major assemblages are unpublished, published material misses out aspects which I feel should be covered. Sampling procedures are rarely specified and ‘types’ are not clearly spelled out in terms of frequency of occurrence. Indeed, I would go further, and argue that the typologies offered are actually damaging, masking much subtle dynamic. If shoes are indeed completely identical in form – and my preliminary research suggests that is the case in some places and at some times for some forms – this implies a spatially and chronologically bounded conformity, which is

worth addressing. This conformity may be rooted in unconscious doxic adherence to a taken-for-granted way of doing, to the conscious adoption of a way of doing (and rejection of other ways) for strategic reasons, or a limited availability of styles due to mass production methods (take it or leave it): other interpretations are possible, and need careful contextualised consideration. Yet the possibility of no two the same equally exists, with another set of implications. These issues will be more fully explored in Chapter 4 where an attempt will be made to link so-called Middle Range Theory into both a symbolic transactional approach derived from Bourdieu and the ‘evidential constraints’ (Wylie 1992: 20)

For this research, the lessons learned have been as follows. Any classification of the footwear must be transparent and clearly related to the activities being investigated. Self-justifying, contextually meaningless typologies must be avoided, and a constant awareness of the significance of both similarity and difference maintained. The use of mystifying ‘technical’ footwear language must be avoided as far as possible, and glossaries provided for situations where it is unavoidable – this research is not about footwear but about the people who made/wore/discarded it. Similarly, the use of elaborate structural drawings, common in the finds accounts, should only be used if appropriate to an argument – this is not a catalogue.

The essence of this research is comparative. Obviously the lack of published material for some large assemblages means that primary recording will be necessary. Some of these assemblages have not even been catalogued and lie unlooked at since the day they were put into the archive. The Chinese Whisper Syndrome – the over reliance on secondary sources in a changing situation - confirms to me the need for hands-on recording even in situations where a ‘finds’ account is available: the Elisenhof story is salutary. Given time constraints, however, sampling decisions will have to be made.

The dating difficulties are serious. At least my initial naivety about this has been dispelled. Writing at the present time with some degree of hindsight, I must say that the pull of chronological typologising is very powerful – the more I handle the footwear (around 2,000 items by the end of the research) the more I find

myself making assumptions about sequences of attributes, and inclined to tell archivists that a particular item cannot be, for example, 12th century because of x, y or z characteristics. This tendency has to be resisted in the interpretation, and the chronologies used at least at initial stages must be based on those given by the site records. Certain compromises will have to be made in relation to those sites where the dating is very broad and these are outlined in chapter 5. Equally, however, blind faith will be given to sites where dating seems too precise to be true. Where these ascriptions of age are challenged, as is I think inevitable, this must be at a later stage of interpretation and very clearly situated and justified.

Finally, the question of context will be addressed more fully in the next chapter. Using the term reflexively is very challenging, but has to be done. What Hodder advocates for on-site practice, I am trying to put into practice in that situated archaeological construct known as ‘the archive’: the doxic world of single-context positivistic practice is in my case the doxic world of ‘finds’ practice. I do not underestimate the ‘reality’ of these constructs.

Finally, there are ways in which the considerable amount of work represented in these accounts can be used, along with material published during the life of the project. Firstly, the range of variation portrayed can assist in definition of variables and attributes, although the recording system will have to be left as open as possible without loss of rigour i.e. the published material offers a starting point for the consideration of variance over the time and space selected. Secondly, the cross-referencing and citation will be used to track down resources and ‘experts’ - in other words, to map the archaeological footwear domain. As far as possible, contacts will be made, and a discourse established with relevant individual ‘experts’. Thirdly, the published information, though partial and biased, will be used to select a sample of assemblages in keeping with the research aims. These issues will be covered in Chapter 5, which concerns the practicalities of the research. Finally, and certainly after the primary research has been completed, published records of specific items (when drawn to scale and from several angles, or well photographed) will be used to amplify and infill the primary data records – this will form the content of Chapter 7 and may well lead to fresh insights and directions.

Final comments

Intensive study of a 'finds' category has become unfashionable in recent years amongst academics, for good reasons. Holistic, narrative reconstruction has become the aim. This chapter has, on the one hand, demonstrated the risks associated with a taken-for-granted approach to artefact variation and the wastefulness of ignoring a rich, abundant and evocative source of understanding. On the other hand, it has also demonstrated the dangers of over-specialism in an artefact class so that the study of the 'objects' becomes an end in itself rather than a means to an end. Ideally, this project should have been carried out as part of a much wider investigation into embodied identification processes. If it stands alone at present, the hope is that it will be integrated into the wider field as soon as possible.

Chapter 3

From Context to Contextualisation

Introduction: Setting the stage

In the recent past – and still so for many archaeologists – the outlining of context may seem a straightforward business of *setting the stage*, of researching and summarising what is already known about the spatio-temporal field of study so that a particular set of events (historians) or pattern of features (archaeologists) can be understood and contribute to a deeper understanding. The discussion of context as used in footwear finds accounts in the last chapter touched upon some of the problems with this taken-for-granted approach. These are far more deeply rooted than practical difficulties due to inadequate recording and archiving. The view of history as, in Callinicos' words:

‘ a discursive construct, constituted in various forms of writing which purport to be about it but which in fact provide forms in which we collectively imagine and represent to ourselves the past appropriate to our present preoccupations’ (Callinicos 1995: 3)

needs to be examined and, if possible, reconciled with Wylie's resonant comments about ‘evidential constraints’ (Wylie 1992: 20) and Shanks and Tilley's famous conceptualising of ‘data as a network of resistances’ (Shanks and Tilley 1987: 104)

This chapter will deal firstly with macro-context, and the insecurities raised by the seeming collapse of the historical Metanarratives that dominated the 20th century in the west - in short, with the modern ‘incredulity toward metanarratives’ (Lyotard 1984: xxiii-iv). Attention will then be focussed on that part of the North European Metanarrative conceptualised as the Middle Ages and the particular difficulties for archaeologists and ethno historians working on questions involving strategic identity in this heavily mythologized period. This

will end with a statement of position on the use of the work of historians, which will then be applied in the next section to consideration of the assumptions made about the social context of footwear across the middle of the medieval period in Northern Europe. Final conclusions are then drawn about the way forward.

a) The collapse of the Metanarrative and the lure of chaos

Metanarratives are ‘grand theories’ which offer a sequential and ideologically structured account of human development. In modern times, historical materialism, formulated most famously by Marx in the mid-19th century, has been the most ideologically potent in terms of being used to inspire, justify and explain human activity in the 20th century: many, like Hobsbawm, Lukacs, followers of Althusser, and Callinicos herself, would argue, still is the most potent. Marx offered what was purported to be an empirically based analysis of the course of human development in stages which lead inevitably to the next, conceptualising this sequence in terms of ownership of surplus labour. Thus Marx saw ‘history of mankind’ as moving in stages through hunter-gatherer to slavery/ feudalism/ capitalism/ socialism. Other grand theories, notably that popularised by Toynbee in the 1940s, (Toynbee 1946) placed more emphasis on cyclical processes, rise and fall of civilisations. Friedman’s model, discussed in Chapter 1, although avowedly neo-Marxist- (1974, 1975, 1989) seems to owe more to a Toynbeean acceptance of cyclical rise and fall, albeit not quite so loaded with value judgements about the virtues of *civilisation* as opposed to the vices of *barbarity*.

The Metanarrative as a chronologically linear, emplotted story which accounts for the present in terms of the past ‘leading up to’ the pinnacle of the present is, of course, by no means the property of academic historians. So-called *origin myths* are widespread, and the boundary between myth and history - indeed, the polarisation of the terms in terms of ‘truth’ - a conspicuous construct separating the knowing (civilised) from the ignorant (barbarian or savage). There is a short step from this to the arguments of Foucault that historical ‘truth’ is an illusion, that the past is unknowable in any *realistic* sense (Foucault 1967, 1977, 1979, 1980). Historical ‘truths’ are instead the product of the ‘will to power’, only meaningful in terms of present intersubjective relationships of power and

dominance. By their nature, they are transient, ephemeral and only understandable in ideological terms. Such thinking - which Callinicos sees as rooted in Nietzschean anti-historicism, i.e. an antipathy towards a history which is seen as nostalgic myth, a dead weight on human potential (Callinicos 1995: 11) - has been supported in the contributions of historical sociologists. Gellner's neo-Weberian empirically based studies of nationalism seem to reveal ideological instrumentality in historical discourse which undermines all securities about 'what really happened' (Gellner 1997). There is only 'the present past' (Hodder 1982b), continuously picked apart and reconstructed in terms of immediate multiple priorities and expediency, most famously in recent times by Baudrillard in his account of the Gulf War event (Baudrillard 1995).

Historical inquiry based, overtly at least, on documentary evidence (the written text) is using previous constructions of 'what really happened'; to use Ankersmit's vivid metaphor, historians delve through the crusts of ice to reach the water below (Ankersmit, 1986: 26). Yet an extreme (and entirely logical) post-modernist view is that there is no 'water below', and that 'what really happened?' in an absolute, realist sense is a meaningless question. In this position, the Metanarratives of Marx and Toynbee and others become of anthropological interest in terms of what they reveal about their adherents, how they are used strategically to justify actions by elite or would-be elite groups, in the way the Metanarratives of the Bible or the Koran are used. They become subjects, not structures, of anthropological enquiry (See, for example in Douglas 1966). Thus many recent critics of historical materialism interpret the framework as being entirely ethnocentric, claiming that Marxism is the negative side of European imperialism, generating self fulfilling prophecies which justify European dominance as inevitable and morally right (Young 1990).

In Metanarratives, identity is largely treated as a collective reified referent though often personified through a small number of charismatic individuals e.g. the Citizens of Rome and Hadrian, or the Huns and Attila. Boundaries of these collectivities are seen as self-evident, and most 20th century British historians do, I think, see 'membership' of such a 'group' as being inborn and lifelong, at least in the so-called pre-modern period. (This will be returned to in Part c of this

chapter when the particular collectivities of 'Mid-Medieval' North European historical discourse will be addressed). Individual identity is, in metanarratives, irrelevant in the long term; although it is interesting that historical materialism is personified with the name of its original propounder. These collective identities are not seen, however as relevant in the post-modernist western world. Instead, they have fragmented into a complex of identity variables, where sex, gender, race, ethnicity, place of birth, kinship/familial role, age, physical beauty, intelligence, accent, dress sense, leadership skills, empathic skills, interplay and are variously seen as acquired (therefore mutable) or ascribed (therefore to be lived with): the question 'who are you?' is now seen as requiring a situation specific, i.e contextualised, response. (See Callinicos 1995: 179-203 on *Identity and Emancipation*)

Archaeologists occupy an ambivalent position in this discourse about the nature of history. On the one hand, archaeologists deal on an everyday basis with 'what really happened' i.e with the material remains of past people's lives, including their actual bodies. The absoluteness of a C14 dating or an undisturbed stratigraphic sequence or DNA matching of skeletal remains seems undeniably secure. On the other hand, as already discussed, Hodder's strictures about the interpretative nature of the archaeological process have considerable resonance when the changing interpretations over time are examined, especially when these past interpretations have been given as definitive accounts. Even so, the taken for granted metanarratives of European archaeologists – a chronological sequence of epochs based on materials used, with a powerful teleological impulse - are in some ways even more dangerous than those of historians. They have become utterly naturalised, built into the very structure of the profession and the world-views of its participants, the layout and content of museums and school curricula, so that the term 'Stone Age' is taken as an ontological historical reality. This is a long way from the ironic tropes of the post-modernists.

At this stage, it is useful to consider what seems at first a very different approach to historical change. Neo-Darwinian social/cultural evolutionists seem to be coming from a very different angle to the question of long term change in human activity, and do not seem, at first glance, to be active participants in the discourse

outlined above. Their approach (e.g. Allen 1997) seems to be rooted rather in the scientific approach popular amongst archaeologists in the 50s-70s, the so-called New Archaeology that used insights from geography, ecology and other 'natural sciences'. Social evolutionists do not seem to have the 'reality' problems discussed above and show little reflexivity about the concepts they borrow from the social sciences such as *culture* or *identity*. They have, however, moved beyond the closed mechanistic systems models used in the past which were based mathematically on the single attractor model of equilibrium and stability (what Ankersmit calls the CLM- Common Law Model- approach: Ankersmit 1986). Unsurprisingly, given post modernist irony, so-called chaos theory is now very fashionable and involves open and continuously adjusting non-linear systems in which response to change and the taking (unintentionally or otherwise) of risks are paramount. This links directly with extreme post modernism where, in the words of Derrida:

'instability and chaos are the essential natural condition – at once a risk and a chance, and it is here that the possible and the impossible cross each other' (Derrida 1996: 84)

We are back to butterfly's wings; only here the trivial incident is the intentional (conscious or unconscious) action of a single human agent.

What is interesting about the models being offered is that chaos in this context does not mean anarchy; rather it is being used in terms of a transcendental and unknowable order. Whilst accepting that prediction is impossible in complex systems, the physical metaphor used for a chaos situation is one of turbulence. Fig 3.1, adapted from McGlade and van der Leeuw (1997:18), illustrates this bounded chaos, within which relationships are non linear, unpredictable in the short term and interactive. From the article, which emphasises strongly the creativity and dynamism of the process, what seems to be being taken for granted as boundary creating are environmental constraints/possibilities. Social change, in McGlade and van der Leeuw's words, needs to be seen as:

‘A dynamic interaction in which social agency, decision making and societal organisation are seen to be embedded in the natural world’ McGlade & van der Leeuw 1997:21.

With this model, stability is seen an ontological human cultural phenomenon, resulting from feedback loops whereby human beings with effort freeze a social complex over time. It is lack of change (reproduction), which is the ‘abnormal’ circumstance characterising the human condition, not change (transformation) which is inherent in the dynamics of natural populations. (McGlade & van der Leeuw 1997: 20). In the most apparently stable human set-up, the seeds of change, risk taking, nonconformity are always present and are the key to survival of the species: this is the neo-Darwinian Metanarrative, with the ‘environment’ often mentioned in anthropomorphic interactionist terms (Allen 1997: 54, Zubrow 1997: 249, Doran 1997:294)

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Figure 3.1. Patterns of Chaos.

**A diagram representing the path of a ‘strange attractor’ that does not repeat itself yet nevertheless remains within clear boundaries,
From McGlade and Van Der Leeuw 1997:18**

It is, however, here and not in the debates about the theory of history that Bourdieu’s ideas re-emerge. His notion of the Habitus and dispositions bear a

marked resemblance, in qualitative terms, to the 'strange attractor' model given above. Bourdieu, of course, sees boundaries as socially constructed, internalised, utterly taken for granted and naturalised: for Bourdieu, presumably, the 'natural world' is a doxic construct of modern western scientific discourse, the 'appropriation by the world of a body thus enabled to appropriate a world'. (Bourdieu 1977: 89), Curiously, Bourdieu is not mentioned at all in Callinicos' wide ranging discussion, although she touches upon Giddens. Only Bourdieu, however, offers a model that allows for a variety of action, which both creates and is limited by deep structures, thereby accommodating the micro-scale and the overarching. With this model, the term 'natural' in modern western discourse patrols the boundary between the doxic (unquestioned, undiscussable, taken-for-granted) and the heterodox (discourse from diverse viewpoints) or orthodox (discourse dominated by conscious adherence to a particular viewpoint and the suppression of others). I find this useful not only in the fourfold hermeneutic which Shanks and Tilley suggest represents the task of archaeologists (Shanks & Tilley 1992; 107-8), but in understanding the discourses in which I myself am a minor player: once again, as Jenkins says, Bourdieu is good to think with. (Jenkins 1992: 176)

These issues are, I think, highlighted when the particular situation of *Medieval Archaeology* is considered, which is the topic of the next section.

b) The construction of the 'Medieval'.

In 1990, David Austin wrote on behalf of archaeologists working with 'Medieval' material:

'.. The fact is that we have been so trapped by the agenda set by historians and so weighed down with the paraphernalia of medieval history that we scarcely feel able to interpret and analyse in the modes of contemporary archaeology' (Austin 1990: 13)

Elsewhere in his article, he points to the huge quantities of archaeological material lying untouched in archives across Northern Europe, or dealt with in a fragmentary way through particularist studies, a topic discussed in the last chapter on footwear finds publications. Later in the 90s, Gilchrist made similar points in her study of female monastics in the later Medieval period, drawing attention to the role of Medieval Archaeology as the ‘handmaiden of history’, used only to stage set or flesh out the great events made real through the work of historians (Gilchrist 1994: 9). Indeed, she argues that archaeology has an inverse relationship with history, being taken seriously only *when documentary evidence* is not available. To the attack by archaeologists that the spade does not lie (unlike documentary texts which are always partial and biased) the Medieval Historian replies tersely that neither can it speak (Grierson 1959:129, quoted in Gilchrist 1994).

Underlying this day-to-day problem are deeper constraints, which are peculiar to the North European situation. The very term ‘Medieval’ or ‘Middle Ages’ implies a transition concept, which is rooted in 17th century intellectual perspectives with a self-justifying retroactive identification with the purity and power of the classical civilisations (Kristiansen 1996: 139). In other words, this is a Metanarrative of the rise and fall of Greece and Rome, then a period of barbarity (the Dark Ages) followed by a gradual recovery mainly through the spread of Roman Christianity and feudalism, a 14th century renaissance, a 16th century rise of capitalism, a 17th-18th century enlightenment and a global extension of this advanced civilisation under the banner of democracy and the free market. These benchmarks are almost beyond argument, i.e. doxic, so deeply ingrained is this narrative, at least as far as I can see. Certainly influential modern historical sociologists such as Giddens and Elias see the people of northern Europe 1,000 years ago as leading lives of Hobbesian brutality, unreflective except in a meditative, passive way. (Elias 1994 (1939): 104) The term ‘Medieval’ used as an insult expresses this daily in modern discourse, for example by the prosecution at the trial of Milosovic at The Hague (The Guardian 12.02.2002). Callinicos, whose interest in the pre-modern is restricted to seeing change which leads ‘up to’ the modern states in Marxist terms, says, in passing, that identity for a person of those times must have been unquestioned and doxic,

as these people did not have contact with people outside their own village (Callinicos 1995:199). It is most curious to see these sophisticated thinkers accepting a mythology of timeless tradition and 'natural', effortless stability.

Already it is clear that the Metanarrative of North European 'Medieval' history can be seen as a powerful ideological construct, an elaborate ethno-centred origin myth which bridges between the 'works of giants' at either end. To make matters more difficult, the myth subsumes a changing collection of sub-plots, relating to origin myths of European nations and would-be nations, which still unselfconsciously describe themselves as races apart (the term 'Anglo-Saxon race' was used on a poster at the Institute of Archaeology UCL in 1997). Likewise the mythology can be adjusted (re-interpreted) and used to justify the power of women (Gimbutas and Goddesses) or other identity 'groups' which regard themselves as oppressed. The very conceptualisation of gens or folks or peoples or, nowadays, ethnic groups, based on birth ascription and bestowing unquestioned, irrevocable identity is a structural element in the European Metanarrative. This caused much bewilderment when used outside Europe to define 'natural' administrative territories under imperial rule, creating 'tribes' which had not existed before e.g. Kikuyu in Kenya (Twagiramutara 1989, Trigger 1996, Sichone 1989). This origin myth is founded upon a vision of a pure, entirely original Hellenic civilisation, represented by such heroes as Plato and Aristotle. Their loss caused the sun to be obscured in the Dark Ages: it is significant that Renfrew in a lecture launching a conference on European archaeology in the 90s used Herodotus for his starting point definition of 'ethnicity'. (Renfrew 1996: 129)

There is, however, another approach used by historians. At the recent Viking-Age conference in Cardiff (July 2001), David Dumville in the opening address drew attention to the polysemeity of 'gens' terms as used in contemporary texts in the Mid-Medieval period in Northern Europe. The conceptual collectivity referred to in modern discourse as the *Vikings* in Northwest Europe (but as the *Normans* in eastern European historical and archaeological discourse) are referred to at various times as Northmen, heathen, Danes, pagans, barbarians, Varangians with no necessary consistency even in one document, let alone between different texts.

These are labels assigned by churchmen, and we have little idea as to how the predatory groups of longship crews ascribed themselves, or indeed how they were constituted.

What is particularly interesting about Dumville's points is that his argument is not inspired by post-modernist or Marxist theory but comes from minute examination of the sources themselves; he is working in the best Collingwood style of historical inquiry (Collingwood 1946). Similarly Chibnell, a scholar dedicated to the translation of the work of Orderic Vitalis (AD1075-c1140) a monk based for most of his life at St Evreux, Normandy, reconstructs the 'world of Orderic Vitalis' using direct textual evidence. She suggests that the class of young men known as household knights at this stage were recruited on merit (battle prowess and physical fitness) provided that the young man could supply his own horse and sword: this equipment was often bestowed by the abbey as a favour to promising young men (Chibnell 1984: 209-220). Neither of these historians seem to be concerned with ideological point scoring or with teleological explanations of modernity - rather their approach is anthropological, looking at how individuals constructed their worlds in intersubjective transactions. They seem concerned only with historical 'truth' (as best estimate) for its own sake: this is what Ankersmit calls an *Analytical Hermeneutic* approach. (Ankersmit 1986:6). Yet both in their own field are subverting the 'timeless stability, doxic identity' assumptions of the Metanarrative promoters in relation to the Northern Europe of a thousand years ago.

Such scholarly detachment can, of course, be subverted, and archaeologists are no more impervious than historians, for all their avowed scientific, forensic objectivity. The most notorious instance was the collaboration of Kossina and others in the construction of a Germanic homeland for the 3rd Reich, but there are countless other examples. (See Fleury-Ilett 1996, Zapotero 1996, Falkenhausen 1996, for example). Some involve straightforward conscious misrepresentation, lies or the destruction of evidence, (see Kohl & Tsetskhladze 1996), but of course, the award of funding and/or opportunity to excavate places obligations in terms of outcomes. Taken with the highly influential insights of Hayden White (White 1975, 1978, 1987) on the nature of historical discourse, it

is possible to be not just simply ironic about ‘truths’ and ‘evidence’ in such situations but to be downright cynical.

A point has now come, then, when a statement of position is needed. The original intention for this research project was to use only contextual evidence based on primary sources i.e archaeological evidence and contemporary documents. As the discussion above shows, this was very naïve. An ‘11th century’ document represents an artefact with a history of its own, its survival a matter of many decisions about archiving, copying, altering, printing, circulating and so on. Furthermore, translations, however well intended as ‘authentic’, cannot avoid compromising on meaning. An interesting article by Barley on Anglo-Saxon texts (Barley 1974) suggested that a range of terms being translated as hue qualifiers (brown, blue etc) in fact conveyed optic variation, (light, glittery, dull etc). Thus the people of the time saw the world differently - bluish glitter rather than glittery blue. Finally, further complexities arise from my own particular perspective – it is extremely hard for someone of my age to cast off from the solid banks of ‘possible truth’ into the swirling currents of postmodernist creativity.

This, then, is a statement of position for this project. The term ‘context’ will be handled as tentative ‘best estimate’ information. Where the information is clearly, convincingly and transparently derived from primary evidence – archaeologically based or primary document based – it will be treated as more reliable than information where, in Schama’s words, fiction has been extensively used to fill the gap between evidence and the lived event (Schama 1991:320, 332). The problem, of course, will be telling the difference. Where historical contextual information seems to be more sweeping and ‘mythological’ (timeless tradition and so on) it will be treated as very much open to testing, although whether any such ideas will gain an audience is another matter. As far as possible, the approach will not be event-focussed: a neutral, chronological span (9th-12th century) which spans ‘across’ conventional event-based break points as incorporated in historical curricula and departmental structures has been chosen. Variability in what people in Northern Europe wore – in how they performed, intentionally or otherwise, their identities – will be contextualised in immediate

terms, using primary evidence with first priority going to archaeological evidence, second priority to performativity in representations such as manuscript illustrations and statuary and then to interpretations of primary texts. This will then be examined in terms of broader contextual evidence especially in relation to sequence, and only finally in terms of the origin Metanarratives discussed above. That there will be interplay between these levels is inevitable but at least not taken for granted.

In short, I will be staying with Analytical Hermeneutics, whilst accepting the ideological framework of historical discourse.

c) First steps in contextualisation: excavating pre-assumptions.

In this section, certain working assumptions about mid medieval footwear and the evidence upon which this is based will be made transparent. This process will draw in wider assumptions about the world in which these people lived, these being in turn embedded in interpretation of evidence. This exercise is particularly important because footwear is a potent, highly active symbolic artefact in the present lived world of Europeans. This is not the place to examine the anthropology of this in any sort of detail, but the least consideration of, for example the use of the abandoned shoe in the mass media to substitute for the (unviewable) tragic body, the iconography of footwear in pop art, the emblematic display of identity through particular kinds of footwear, the fact that in the practice of purchase footwear is the only clothing item nowadays sold in an interpersonal interaction between seller and consumer, does, I think, make the point. The relevance of this here is not to argue some kind of long-term continuity across 1,000 years (although it would be interesting to try) but to avoid back projection of taken-for-granted assumptions as far as possible.

All the assumptions relate only to the defined research area, although they may of course be relevant elsewhere. They were formulated at the Research Masters stage of this project, have continued to be held through the later research but may well become subject to modification.

i) The assumption that the wearing of footwear was universal.

This issue is discussed by De Neergaard in relation to London, using the evidence of representations and later medieval texts (Grew & De Neergaard 1988: 112-3). She concludes that barefootedness (not shodness) was the special case, related to the emblematic display of holiness, which was at the time associated with poverty and penitence (i.e suffering). This association, however, does not seem to extend to the removal of footwear in holy places by lay visitors (as with mosques). The iconography of representations does show some difference in shodness between men and women in sacred contexts. This will be fully discussed in Chapter 8.

Testing this assumption in relation to ‘heathen’ areas is more problematic, as documentary evidence is slight (though see journeys of Ansgar in Hallencreutz 1984, and the Arab traveller from Cordoba, Al-Tartushi, in Brønsted 1960: 42-3). Where pagans do feature in representations e.g. the carvings from Lindisfarne, the feet are shod even if the torso is naked. The figures in the 8th -9th century Gotland rock-carvings are all shod, even when involved in ritual activities (Graham-Campbell 1980: 179 also fig. 3.2a). Where taphonomy is right for leather survival e.g. at 10th century Wolin, large quantities of footwear survive, implying a usage running beyond a minority elite or another such special group. (Wiklak 1993)

A grey area exists in relation to children. Children rarely appear in representations, except for the Christ Child who is almost always unshod. Preliminary examination of footwear assemblages does, however, in most (but not all) cases show a range of sizes from tiny infant to large adult. Whether the absence of children’s sizes implies an absence of children (as in an all-male trading community, for example) or simply that the children did not wear shoes is open to debate. This is not an inconsequential matter: if Bourdieu’s Habitus model is taken seriously, the lived experience of childhood lies at the heart of habituation (see chapter 1).

This brief discussion raises broad contextual assumptions about the shifting Christian – pagan frontier over this period. That this is far from a simple

oppositional situation is being much discussed at present (see the many contributions to *The Cross goes North*, Carver (ed) 2002) and will need to be returned to later (Chapter 9). The fact remains that, from the evidential point of view, as far as the wearing of footwear is concerned, large parts of the research area are lacking in representational and textual evidence for much of the time.

ii) *The assumption that footwear was a personal possession*

Sorenson, in her study of body wear from 2nd millennium European burials makes an interesting case for seeing some items as completely personalised, worn/used during life by the now dead person and presumably signifiers of unchangeable identity (Sorenson 1997). With footwear, the situation is more difficult. Folklorists write about the *todenschuh* in what they see as Germanic mythology, where the dead had to be buried with shoes on to walk the stony path to Hel, although the evidence on which such stories are based is uncertain (Leach 1950: 1008-9). The Oseberg burial is the only archaeological example of leather survival in a burial of this period and shoes did form part of the grave assemblage. Unfortunately, they were not on the feet of the 2 skeletal bodies found there and much argument has taken place over to whom these shoes 'belonged' (Blindheim 1959: 79, Hald 1972: 113-5). Other burials of this period, to my knowledge, were mainly unfurnished Christian (e.g. at Sedgeford, Norfolk: Faulkner 2000) and/or dry sites where leather did not survive except as metallicised scraps (e.g. see Birka: Geijer 1938, 1983).

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**Figure 3.2a. Shod figures from a carved tomb stone.
Lärbro, Gotland, Sweden, 8th -9th century?
Brønsted 1960: Plate 22A**

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**Figure 3.2b. From the Paris Psalter, produced Winchester, late 12th
century. Note adult beggars without, and poor children with, shoes.
Van der Hörst et al 1996**

All other footwear from the research period comes from dump deposits (rubbish pits, waterfront revetment backfill, ditches and, rather more enigmatically, road surfaces) and questions of 'belonging' cannot be addressed from context alone. A scan of Anglo Saxon wills reveal bequests of items of clothing and personal equipment but never a mention of shoes (Whitelock 1930). This could imply such close identification of the footwear with the deceased that passing them on was unthinkable but it could also imply that footwear was a communal item and not part of the individual's self-ascribed personal identification assemblage or that footwear was a taken-for granted ephemeral item. There are, however, documented examples of personalised footwear being used in the process of displaying sanctity and the elevation of saints (see Chapter 7 part b).

Perhaps the most important source of evidence here lies in the footwear itself. Unlike many other items of body wear, footwear is shaped to the wearer's body, in subtle and varying ways. Size variation in these shoes is, as already mentioned, considerable in terms of width and length. Furthermore, many shoes exhibit well defined wear patterns on the soles, which do seem to relate to constant pressure by the same foot. There is also evidence however, that footwear leather was frequently recycled. This is inferred from cut marks on fragments, showing cannibalisation of the leather, and by the 12th century there is textual evidence, through city bylaws governing the activities of shoemakers that many shoes were made from recycled leather. It is also possible that worn shoes were discarded or passed on and repaired for wear by a different, perhaps poorer or more junior, owner.

This, then, is a shaky assumption, which will have to be handled with caution when questions of identity performance are being addressed (see next chapter). Contextualisation here is mainly through archaeological evidence.

iii) The assumption that footwear was made by specialist craftspeople.

The shoemaker is an archetypal figure in north European mythologies, with his/her own patron saints such as Crispin and Crispianus, symbolised in later medieval iconography by the awl. (Swan 1986: 4). The itinerant cobbler (mender

of shoes) is looked upon as an archaic tradition, and was common in 19th century rural northern Europe. (Goubitz 2001: 31) Certainly by the later Middle Ages shoemakers guilds are well documented in north European cities (Nicholas 1997: 138) stratified into status groups with cordwainers (users of fine leather from Cordoba) at the top. The earliest charters for Cordwainers Guilds date in Toulouse to AD 1158, Chartres to the early 12th century and in London to the 12th century. (Nicholas 1997: 136, Swann 1986: 5).

The situation in the preceding period, however, is much more obscure. In the 9th century, for example, cloth weaving is interpreted as almost entirely home based, carried out by women using warp-weighted vertical looms. (Hoffman 1964, Wilson 1976, Owen-Crocker 1986 and many others). There is some evidence, however, that the so-called family monasteries, reviled by Bede (Bede 1955: 253-4, 345-7) involved the gathering together of women into a workshop situation for production of cloth for a more organised (though not necessarily commercial) market. Parallel concentrations could be found in the huge estate-villas of 8th -9th century mainland Europe (Dutton 1952: 78) and has been suggested for Goltho in 9th - 10th century Lincolnshire (Beresford 1987: 56-58). In England, spinning was so quintessentially part of the identity of women that Alfred in his will used the metaphor of *the spear and the spindle* to signify male and female descent lines (Keynes & Lapidge 1983: 178). By the 12th century, however, the weaving as an activity seems to have become male dominated, using horizontal workshop-based looms. This complex shift, which has huge implications for gender relationships, is itself the subject of much debate (Wilson 1976, Owen Crocker 1986: 178-9). The emergence, however, of the specialist shoemaker (always shown in representations as male) is much more cloudy. Indeed, Hald shows that in more remote parts of Europe, domestic manufacture of shoes from home-cured leather was taking place in the early 20th century. (Hald 1972)

In his colloquy dated to around AD1000 (Swanton 1993: 173), Aelfric includes shoemakers in his list of craft people necessary to the proper running of the world. His description of their products extends beyond footwear into belts, purses, scabbards and so on. Beyond this, however, the shoemaker is elusive and his/her presence depends on inference from quality and consistency of styles (not

at all reliable) and the presence of debris from what seem to be workshops (see below). This latter would be more easily interpreted if such debris was clearly associated with urban zones and absent from smaller settlements such as 9th century Elisenhof or 11th century Paladru, but this is not the case.

It is important to recognise here the very real possibility of itinerant, maybe seasonal shoemakers, using either locally tanned hides or carrying a few rolled up ones. The implications of this for the spread of ideas are considerable (Clarke has suggested itinerant manufacture to explain the distributional aspects of bone combs styles at this time: Clarke & Ambrosiani 1995: 161). This assumption then raises huge questions about concepts of labour, gender, changing interaction between town and country dwellers, and, towards the end of the research period, issues to do with attempts to monopolise production of a mass consumer item.

iv) The assumption that footwear was locally made

This is an important assumption in relation to archaeological evidence in that it involves the assumption that footwear was not an item of trade but produced at the consumer market (this does not, of course, imply that raw or tanned hides production has necessarily the same location). It follows from this that if footwear from two widely separated places is identical, then it is the design which has travelled, not the shoe itself. Another corollary is that 'alien', one-off shoes are likely to be exotics brought into the place as a personal possession of a migrant or visitor, rather than as part of a trade cargo.

The broader context here is one of trade and commerce, or to use a more archaeological term, diffusion. Evidence for patterns of trade comes mainly from archaeology (distribution of coinage, Rhineland lava quern stones, Scandinavian soapstone and reindeer antler for example) and, later on from trade charters such as the one granted under Aethelred to the city of Rouen for the right to trade in 'wine and blubber-fish' in the city of London. (Bates 1993: 5). There are also surviving accounts of trade journeys such as that presented in the writings of Alfred, which describes the journeys of Ohthere and Wulfstan (Swanton 1993: 62-6). There is primary textual evidence for redistributive and/or commercial

movement of manufactured cloth (e.g. Allott 1974: 53, quoting Alcuin) and even some for processed hides (Hodges 1989: 33, 127). In the case of geographically specific material such as Niedermendig lava for quern stones the case for physical movement from a to b is undeniable. (Vince 1990: 97)

For footwear, however, the situation is less clear. On the plus side, evidence for shoe making is close to unmistakeable, consisting of distinctive trimmings (offcuts), cut pieces, edge of hide fragments and shoe-making equipment such as awls. Finds of these are associated with all known assemblages, even those from tiny settlements. A more negative argument is the lack of mention of shoes as a trade item. Footwear manufacture then, is assumed to be an industry using a widely available raw material, a simple and portable tool kit, serving a near-universal market (see i above) and therefore located in relation to consumer demand, rather than source of raw materials as in the cases of pottery manufacture or wine production.

In this section the Dark Ages Economics model proposed by Hodges (Hodges 1989) has been deliberately skated over: some return to this will be made in Chapter 9.

v) The assumption that footwear was a short-lived artefact, frequently replaced

This is a complex, embedded assumption whose implications are not as trivial as may first seem. It arises entirely from archaeological evidence, namely that a high proportion of shoe soles show considerable wear and in many instances, repair using leather patches. Of all items of body-wear, footwear takes by far the heaviest load – it is, of course, the interface between the body and the ground, through which in motion the whole weight of the body is transferred. Rates of wear depend on a number of factors – time spent on shod feet, abrasiveness of surface being trodden, weight of wearer, possession of more than one pair of shoes, durability of material used for the sole, use of intermediate devices such as the Patten. Furthermore, these need to be seen in a context of attitudes to signs of wear – letting in water could be seen as a sign of penitence and humility or as a

degrading sign of poverty – to notions of ‘waste’ and the socio-economics of replacement.

Evidence for these is, needless to say, not directly available and, as far as I know, no experimental archaeology has been carried out to assess rates of wear. Nevertheless, circumstances which would result in a long (cross-generational) life for a pair of shoes would be exceptional. Lucas in a charming article on footwear in Ireland describes 19th century Irish girls carrying their shoes, barefoot, to town on Sunday and sitting in the grass outside the town to put them on for church (Lucas 1956: 341). Such shoes would no doubt last a lifetime. Nevertheless, the wear incidence mentioned above suggests more regular usage and the shodness of nearly all people at all times in anything approaching a secular setting in representations strengthens the idea that most people wore shoes when they were on their feet. The relative softness of the leather soles over most of this period (changes by the 12th century) further reduces the life expectancy of a shoe. A very tentative estimate for a soft leather shoe worn every day by a medium weight person on the lightly gravelled roads of Mid-Medieval cities would be one to two years. Goubitz, in his recent publication, estimates a similar time (Goubitz 2001: 16, 77).

The important implication of this for this research project, which is exploring identification strategies through footwear variability, is that footwear has the potential to be altered on a frequent basis within the limits allowed by the technology (see next section). Because of this physical ephemerality, long-term stylistic continuity is of particular interest, involving constant literal reproduction of the same. Both consumer and producers have, conversely, the potential to respond very quickly to transformational impulses in a way that is not so easy with high-investment durables such as houses or metal wares. This makes footwear variation a potentially fertile subject of enquiry for questions of identity performativity.

vi) The assumption that the technology of shoe making showed little (if any) change across this period.

This assumption involves the equipment, materials and practical methods used, not the design. Again, the evidence to support this is almost entirely archaeological, derived from the footwear itself and from the implements associated with what are interpreted as production sites. There is no evidence of innovation in equipment, materials (although leather types do vary and there is variation in the use of leather thong or bast for stitching) or cutting method (although what is cut out varies considerably). This contrasts with changes in other manufacturing areas such as textiles (mentioned above) and pottery (larger and hotter kilns). I am not taking this continuity for granted – it is in itself most interesting – but its importance at this stage is the interpretative freedom it gives: stylistic variability cannot be attributed to fundamental technical ‘advances’ or ‘limitations’.

vii) The assumption that variability in Mid-Medieval footwear cannot be explained in terms of rational adaptive responses to the environment.

The footwear of this period has been dismissed by some as utilitarian, (Vince 1990: 146). I will be arguing that this is inadequate, unless perhaps it is seen in McGlade terms as a risk taking survival response to perceived social change. As such, footwear variability may tell us more about the thinking of the peoples of this time and place than the writings (however fascinating) of a monk for a tiny, select audience.

Final Comments

This has been an extremely difficult chapter to write. Whilst accepting intellectually the various postmodernist contributions to the historical discourse, and indeed recognising that this research into identification processes through the body using a particularly potent and abundant item of body wear does indeed fit with ‘modern preoccupations’, I am too much of an archaeologist to accept the

Foucaultian/ Nietzschean ‘will to power’ view of historical ‘truth’. If I did not ‘believe’ in the validity of inference of past meanings from the material remains of past people, I would not be ‘doing’ archaeology.

What I have learned to do is to handle context not as a given but as a series of questions and tentative responses, starting with a particular class of artefact but moving outwards rapidly to an ever widening field i.e. to build in contextualisation as an ongoing hermeneutic process rather than to ‘give a context’. Because I am concerned with ‘ordinary people’, the work of most medieval historians – endless sequences of high level political interactions – offers few answers and at this stage most of the contextual ‘best estimates’ are based on archaeological evidence. I would expect the work of historians to be more useful at the later interpretative stage.

In short, contextualisation is a dynamic, discursive, interactive, interpretative process, not the identification and presentation of a ‘given’ body of facts: this may seem obvious but it is the most important single lesson I have learned doing this research.

Chapter 4

The Middle Ground

Introduction: Bridging the gap

The previous three chapters have, I think, revealed the gulf between the practice of archaeology (chapter 2) and the discourse of archaeologists located in the academic domain, particularly in relation to medieval studies. There are exceptions, notably Gilchrist (1994, 1997, 1999) but a recent edition of *Medieval Archaeology* Vol XLV 2001 contains not a single citation to a theorist of any kind, except a few which could be construed as art-historical. Hodder's discussion of this problem is well known and has been mentioned before in this text. His recommendations as laid out in *The Archaeological Process* (1999) of on-site specialist teams working in a situations of fully acknowledged and encouraged hermeneutic process are attractive but they are, sadly, of little use in making use of already existing archaeological material.

I have argued that the problem with finds work, in the case of footwear at least, is its lack of relevance to anyone except other footwear specialists. Yet moving between archaeological finds and, for example, Foucault's will to power is challenging. It usually peters out either on the one hand with the 'practitioners' doing some low level comparative work and leaving detailed comparison for someone else or, on the other hand, the theorists examining and evaluating the existing body of theory, offering new insights and then performing a perfunctory 'application' using someone else's heavily constructed 'data'. This is not to minimise the tremendous integrative analysis involved in the particularist studies mentioned earlier such as the charting of the growth of London, Hedeby or Bergen. Yet these studies, because of their isolation, remain firmly embedded in taken-for-granted Metanarratives.

This chapter is an attempt to find a framework, which can be used to handle the implications of the enormous variation in footwear in the research domain in a

way that accommodates both difference and similarity and suggests possible interpretations of any patterns. Using such a framework, especially one that has been produced through considerable discussion and critical sharing, should improve the transparency of the research process and harness the skills of others. It will not, however, be of any use unless its relationship to both the 'real world' and the 'theoretical world' can be clearly seen

a) A 'Middle Range' theoretical construct: Style

The working concept of style as a distinctive shared 'way of doing' (Conkey & Hastorf 1990: 2-3; Hodder 1990b) in relation to the material world, resulting in visible and meaningful commonalities and differences of form, is a fundamental tool of archaeologists. Modern thinking tends to construe stylistic variation as evanescent, strategic and polysemous, useful because of the access it gives to the structures of 'worlds of meaning', the dispositions of the *Habitus*, which are both created by and instantiated in the relationship of the self to the material world (see Chapter 1). Nevertheless, a shared acceptance of the existence and meaningfulness of stylistic patterning in terms of relationships between form, space and time lies in the *doxa* of all archaeological work. This is as true for 'high level' theorists looking at stylistic affinities (Bourdieu 1984: 172-3), graphic vocabulary (Shanks and Tilley 1992: 153) or cultural themes (Hodder 1990b) as for the 'dirt archaeologist' on site, classifying finds into pottery/ Roman/ Samian/ type X / late 2nd century. Style is a taken for granted key construct in the *Habitus* of the *social field* of present-day archaeologists.

The most important contribution of processual archaeology to this field of study was a new approach to 'meaningful' stylistic variation, whereby the *behaviour* related to the creation and reproduction or transformation of the stylistic commonalities and differences became the focus of attention rather than the style of the *forms* in their own right. This led to a widening of the concept of style to include technical – literally 'ways of doing' - use-life and disposal styles. (Binford 1965, 1986). Explanation of stylistic behaviours tended to be formulated in universalistic terms of adaptation to a system, triggers for change being associated with 'externals' such as climatic change or population pressure.

‘Function’ became the most basic aspect of stylistic variation. The intellectual weaknesses of this systems model have led to a scorn for ‘positivism’ ‘functionalism’ and processualism generally (Shanks and Tilley 1992: 29-45, Hodder and Shanks 1995: 3-29). Yet the emphasis on recursive stylistic *behaviour* – individuals as active agents constructing their worlds of meaning and being themselves constructed by the meaningful world – remains at the heart of modern archaeology (e.g. in Tilley 1999: 28-33).

The starting point of this research is the stylistic variability in footwear in Northern Europe in the 10th/11th/ early 12th century: what can it tell us about the ways people behaved in that time and place and what was going on in their minds? A broad theoretical framework has already been established in Chapters 1 to 3. The outstanding problem lies in the seeming gulf between *theory* and *practice*. If the recent trend nowadays in high-level theory in archaeology towards emphasising the polysemy of material culture, its recursive continuous strategic redefinition, (Shanks and Hodder 1995: 9-10, Tilley 1999: 36-7) is taken to its logical extreme, then archaeologists (especially prehistorians) might as well give up: past meanings are inaccessible. The historical-particularist approach where every micro-situation is seen as only interpretable in terms of its context leads to a logical situation where context is unknowable by those who have not constituted it and accounts of past contexts can only stand as more or less acceptable (by modern ethical standards) ideological constructions of the present past. This was discussed in detail in the last chapter, and a way forward using the dynamic concept of contextualisation as an interactive process developed. In this process, the concept of style is a useful, though not indispensable, concept.

b) Middle Range for Middle Scale

Sorensen, in her interesting account of Bronze Age dress variation (Sorensen 1997), devises and applies a set of etic dimensional categories for the mapping of significant difference and similarity over time and space. For taphonomic reasons, most of her information comes from metal objects, seen as ‘ornaments’,

itself a concept with in-built assumptions about the body as an instrument of performative identification. Sorenson examines not only the variations of the artefacts themselves, in intra-local (display within a community) and inter-regional (display between communities) contexts but also positions of ornaments on the body and the way in which various items are combined to give an overall effect. From this she infers at least two major identification variants for women, which are possibly associated with status as mothers or non-mothers – maiden and matron, to use European archetypes (the postmenopausal crone archetype does not feature in Sorenson's analysis)

'Visibility' as a necessary characteristic of embodied communication of identity is mentioned by Sorenson as an 'obvious' point but not followed through (Sorensen 1997: 94-5). The limitations of such an implicit grading of features are not discussed – presumably she takes for granted the *high* visibility of metal ornaments. Although she discusses the overlap and shifts in distributions as a basis for her interpretation, these are not given in her article. Moreover, although her analytical categories are thoughtful and ensure coverage of aspects often overlooked in studies of 'costume variation', they are not necessarily transferable to other themes. In short, although Sorenson uses many empirical studies to support her 'middle range' theory, her locus in relation to the higher level theories is uncertain and her assumptions on categories unquestioned: this weakens her conclusions by raising questions of comparability, rigour of 'method' and the significance of her conclusions.

Much of the implicit theory of the relationship of identity and stylistic variation comes from a discourse active in the late 1980s and involving a relatively small group of ethno-archaeologists such as Wobst, Sackett, Wiessner, Conkey, Hastorf and, rather unexpectedly given the Mid-Western locus of this discourse, Hodder (collected in Conkey & Hastorf 1990). One of the important concepts used in this debate was that of 'isochrestism' defined by its developer Sackett as 'there's more than one way to kill a cat' in relation to ways of making (Sackett 1990: 33). As with Shanks and Tilley around the same time (Shanks & Tilley 1992:144) attention was focussed on the inadequacies of the model of function where stylistic variability was relegated to a what-is-not-functional residual status in

analysis (as e.g. in Neiman 1995). Stylistic variability was seen as information exchange through coded cultural and historically specific messaging (Wobst 1977) or, alternatively but not contradictorily, as playing an active role in social interaction (Wiessner 1984, 1990).

Wiessner's analysis of headband and projectile point variation amongst the Kalahari San has been widely quoted in Middle Range theoretical interpretations involving style (e.g. Shennan 1989:18-19, Carr 1995: 3-26, Jones 1997:113-116), and seems to underlie Sorenson (see above). Wiessner argued that the behavioural base of stylistic variation (which would include not simply artefacts but body language, use of language, rituals etc) involves a universal human cognitive process relating to continuous strategic self-other comparison, and emulation/rejection of similarity/difference, the process enabled, contained and channelled by social structures. Material content, of course, would be situation specific and contextualised but the process was, she thought, citing cognitive psychologists such as Tajfel, Lemaire and Zavalloni, universal and indeed part of the evolutionary process. (Wiessner 1984: 193). She distinguished in the San context between variability being used strategically to enhance personal identity from that which enhanced membership of a group. These ideas, much discussed in a fairly limited circle, are summarised in Fig. 4.1 and further discussed below.

Underlying the dynamic nature of stylistic variability, where it is construed as contested and strategic, is a notion of, to use Sackett's term, 'deep vernacular style'. This is the kind of concept bitterly contested by Binford as an example of the mental template notions used by previous archaeologists (Binford 1986:558-560), where differences at both artefact and assemblage levels was attributed to sequential development (if 'slow' and 'gradual') or invasions by a 'new' people with a different culture (if 'swift' and 'sudden'). There are countless examples of taken-for-granted absolute typologies being used to structure interpretation: seriation, for example, is predicated on continuities of stylistic variation in artefacts (see Shennan 1997 341-5, for example). Shennan, developing Wiessner's ideas, distinguishes between those artefacts which are being used to assert identity (in intra or inter group interactive contexts) and those whose stylistic homogeneity

‘..... simply arises where particular artefacts or aspects of them are not of great importance so that choices about how to make them are largely automatic or subconscious, arising from local patterns of enculturation rather than being used in the process of identification’

Shennan 1989: 19

This is a curious dismissal of stylistic homogeneity. In Bourdieu’s thinking, the automatic and subconscious decisions are the most deeply habituated, doxic beyond any thought of questioning, and therefore the most revealing of profound structures. If, for example, this long-term ‘vernacular style’ is associated with the material culture of women and ‘emblemic patterning’ with that of men, then the implications are interesting to say the least.

Finally, there is a case for stylistic variability being explicable in terms of stochastic drift i.e. unintentional change, as an outcome of particular enculturation practices in relation to specific ways of making. Neiman (1995) discusses the different implications of situations when the teaching / learning of specific crafts is tightly controlled by a small group (e.g., a closed-shop craft guild) as opposed to situations when teaching / learning is informal and diffused through a wide network (e.g. woman to woman within families) in a non-literate context.

This will be returned to shortly in Part d, where the relationship of these Middle Range style concepts and theories will be related to some of the broader theories discussed earlier. At this point, however, it is useful to look at what has been rather grandiosely entitled *A Unified Theory of Artefact Design*, which claims to bring together the strands discussed above. Before this, however, the diagrammatic summary of points made so far, in fig. 4.1, is useful.

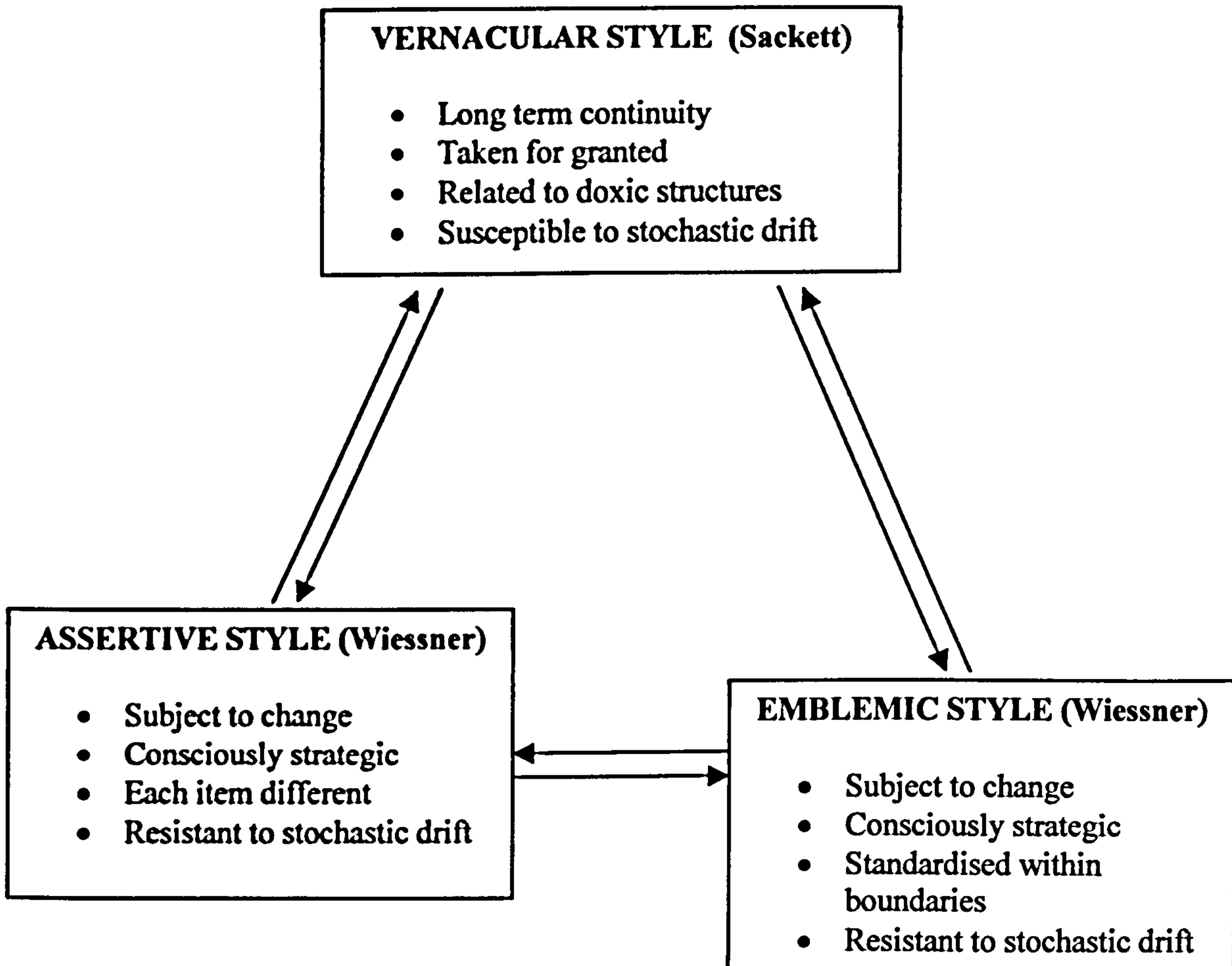
c) Carr’s *Unified Theory Of Artefact Design*

Carr’s ideas are presented in a relatively recent publication (1995) but the ideas propounded by him and his associates come out of a long-term discourse centred on the University of Arizona and focussing on the interpretation of evidence from

the Americas. In his Unified theory, Carr tries to integrate what has been presented as competing interpretative models into one framework. He sets out a methodology which operationalises, in a transparent and rigorous way, the analysis and synthesis of stylistic information in a search for structural meanings, yet also allows for the critiques of modern archaeological theorists. In his own words, he tries to 'strike a balance between positivistic-nomothetic and particularist views of material culture' (Carr 1995: 243) and thereby to offer an operational way forward for confused archaeologists.

Carr's conscientious bridge building attempt can be seen as producing the worst of both worlds, over-deterministic and yet so qualified that it is unworkable. Indeed, from the high level point of view, he shoots himself in the foot at least twice. He says about contextual information '.... although these data lie formally outside the Unified Theory of Artefact design, they are critical to its appropriate and full application' (Carr 1995: 246) and goes on to list exhaustively the kind of contextual data essential to the application of his theory; complete 'culture-history' is just one item. The criticisms outlined in chapter 3 are relevant here. More serious, in my view, is a point raised in his discussion of the *Visibility Hierarchy of Attributes*, the establishment of which is central to his methodology, where he mentions problems raised by the cultural relativity of perception (Carr 1995: 187).

Figure 4.1. A suggested relationship between style concepts.



NB: These analytical labels make no assumptions about kinds of artefact. In changing contexts, a particular artefact could signify in different ways. The emphasis is, instead, on patterns of variation over time and in relation to structural variables such as sex, ethnicity, peer-groups and social class. These latter ‘groupings’, if they exist, will not necessarily have spatially discreet distributions.

This is not just a difficulty with 'exotic' cultures; see Barley's analysis cited in the last chapter (Barley 1974).

The key elements of Carr's Unified Theory are set out in Appendix 4 and the rest of this section will follow through its implications for the research aims. In the conclusion to this chapter, an evaluation of the approach will be made and future directions suggested. Two important qualifications must, however, be made in advance. Firstly, the limitations of any middle range model must not be forgotten, i.e. a constantly reflexive approach must be used, both in relation to the 'data' being extracted from the footwear *and* the contextual data supplied by the historical evidence. The theory should be applied, to use Carr's own term, in a spirit of 'constrained indeterminacy'. (Carr 1995: 211)

Secondly, the essentially synchronic nature of the model must be taken into account. This is a model which has arisen from the work of anthropologists, not historians; reproduction and transformation over time are construed as contextual background to the *now* of the interactive situation (Carr 1995: 244) these issues will be returned to in the conclusion.

Roe, early in Carr, defines style as:

'... an intentional structured system of selecting certain dimensions of form, process or principle, function significance and affect form amongst known alternative possibilities to create pleasing variability within a behavioural-artefactual corpus.' Roe 1995: p 31.

Later, Roe amplifies this by referring to:

'..... deep, structural, unconscious but basic and pervasive cultural metaphors that structure stylistic output – these metaphors aid in selecting the very technology that exploits the environment itself.'
Roe 1995 p 34.

Carr turns these ideas into research strategies. He separates conceptually FORM (materials, morphology, wear and repair) from PROCESS (constraining and enabling factors). Basically, Carr's procedure recommends firstly identifying

artefact class and attributes, which is familiar territory. Then he recommends the ranking of attributes according to emic visibility (highly contextualised), priority in manufacturing decisions and order place in production decisions. Attribute states are then mapped over space and time. Carr then provides, for consideration as Process, a long list of possible contributory factors, ranging from access to raw materials to 'inexpressible personal conscious aspects of the psyche' e.g. mythological themes and archetypes (Carr & Neitzal 1995: 12-14). He then offers an extensive table of Bridging Constructs, which offer logical links between certain processes and mapped patterns. These operate on a variety of 'phenomenological levels' and are shown in Appendix 4. Carr recommends that for complex societies, multiple artefact classes should be used because of the multiplicity of possible relationships. He claims that in the end:

'Analysis can focus on the states and patterns that relevant attributes take compared with those expected on the basis of some higher level theoretical framework'.

Carr 1995: 250.

Does this theoretical procedure fit with the 'empirical'? There is little difficulty in applying the first two steps to footwear, which follows a familiar path (see Chapter 2). Ranking, however, does present problems. The perceptual definitions and the risk of ethnocentric projection are considerable with visibility aspects. The planning and production decision hierarchies can be based only on reasoning backwards from the footwear itself with a tiny input from contemporary representations (with all their limitations). Nevertheless, the process of trying to do this does raise interesting questions, especially as the makers and wearers of Mid-Medieval footwear are assumed to be in a producer-consumer relationship (see Chapter 3 part c). To what extent was demand for a particular style of footwear created by makers for moneymaking reasons, or created by consumer preferences or limited by ordinances, as in the later Sumptuary Laws? These are all very relevant if transformations in similarity/ differences are being seen as strategic – strategic for whom? Intervisibility of bodies becomes a very interesting issue here, both in terms of the whole body (shut away?) and particular parts of the body. On a larger scale, to what extent did people have the chance to actually see alternatives? To what extent did people have access to

iconography of the human body? (Street theatre? Statuary? Murals in churches?) As Wiessner suggests, the locus of people in relation to contact networks has implications for the behavioural comparisons being charted.

Process delineation also presents enormous problems. Carr's faith in the ability to identify past 'gestalts' in the context of, say, the Iroquois of 100 years ago is touching, but the idea of doing this for the people of Mid-Medieval Northern Europe is daunting, not least because of myth-creating nationalist agendas so prominent in European historical narratives (see Chapter 3). Nevertheless, again the questions are interesting to ask and Carr's expert common-sense range of possibilities a very useful checklist: it is no bad thing to be examining the European past using perceptions and understandings gained through studies of Native American social interaction. The inclusion of aesthetics, trance states and physiological constraints within the framework is most stimulating. His Bridging Constructs do place the interpretation of patterns on an open, transparent (rather than intuitive and pseudo-mystical) basis and are, I assume, meant to be arguable. Carr does emphasise that his ideas should be handled using an approach of 'constrained contingency'. Finally, his finishing point about the relationship to higher-level frameworks fits well with my own intentions in relation to the European Metanarrative in particular.

It is possible to see Carrs Unified Theory as a training device for technicians: do this, look it up and this is the meaning. I think it is more than that, and in the next chapter will be using some elements in the final research design. Its biggest weakness, however, is the seeming absences of explicit links through to what Carr calls Higher Level theories – the label *Middle Range Theory* is a good excuse, it would seem, for avoiding this onerous task.

c) Style theories and post-processualism

Firstly, and most strikingly to a European, no link into the main political paradigms which dominate European intellectual discourse is evident in the entire

Carr & Neitzel volume. Carr's theory seems to have an innocence – almost a naivety - from the European viewpoint, which is hard to evaluate. Although Wiessner uses subversion, masking and ideological appropriation in her discussion (although not in her analysis), Carr discusses material manifestation such as Yugoslav 'national dress' as if this is a simple and natural expression of group identity. He seems unaware that perhaps such 'identity' statements are rather more complex than this and national dress a contested construct, often of very recent origin (Chapman 1995, Welters 1995). Indeed, none of the American 'stylists' show any interest in anything more complex than the Inka Empire (Carr 1995: 340) and there is no trace whatsoever of 'historical materialism'.

There are, however, clear links to structuralism. Levis Strauss' work is widely cited in the Carr volume, mainly in relation to *La Pensee Sauvage* and mythemic symbolism, and terms such as 'structure' are used as self-evident. The work of Douglas, however and Ricoeur are not mentioned and although the term metaphor is widely used, it is not dealt with in semiotic terms (although there is some discussion) but rather in connection with depth psychology and Jungian archetypes. All of the stylists use quantitative methods to explore their research questions and there is a 'scientific' gloss to the presentation.

It would be easy to see these theories as a redoubt of positivism, with a strong dash of 'new age' mysticism to enliven it. There are heavy deterministic cause and effect implications in Carr's Unified theory. Yet I think the main difference between these approaches and those of European 'grand theorists' is the emphasis placed on the individual and the self. It is not by chance that Wiessner used cognitive psychology to justify her basic assumptions about identification processes and their relationships with stylistic variability. Neither is it surprising that Goffman is the sociologist most commonly cited.

Goffman (b1922, d1982) was an extremely influential micro-sociologist, at least in American circles. He developed the so-called *dramaturgical* approach, in which people were seen as performers, and *impression management* at the heart of social interaction (Goffman 1959). Goffman's work facilitated the understanding of the minute details of face-to-face interaction, and by the late

1960s was leaning towards a phenomenological approach (Goffman 1986) and sociolinguistics (Goffman 1981). Goffman has consistently been accused of neglecting macrosociological concerns such as class structures and economics, charges he accepted cheerfully: he simply was not interested in the macro. He has also been accused of being an 'apologist for capitalism', cynical and overly concerned with the trivial (e.g. in Gouldner 1971). Others, however, saw him as a dangerous radical, because his work showed only too well the fragility of seemingly routine and stable everyday life. Goffman's work was only loosely related to 'empirical evidence' and his style more that of an essayist rather than a social scientist: a guru, perhaps, rather than a researcher. In this last sense he does, of course, resemble Foucault and Giddens, and it is hard to imagine anyone further from positivistic determinism, rigour and systems model building.

The links with the kind of 'postmodernist' thinking of, for example, such seemingly separated postmodernists as Butler (1990, 1993) and Rorty (1996) are clear, with the emphasis on performativity, negotiability and provisionality of social relationships. Along with this goes a focus on small group interaction, personal identity as continually created (Goffman 1983). A 'reality' of large-scale groupings such as class is not denied, just not important. This is certainly not the place to discuss fundamental differences of emphasis in intellectual discourse on either side of the Atlantic, but it does show, I think, that the seeming absence of 'high level' theory in the Style theories is more a matter of emphasis and focus than first appears. Thus the creativity of the individual artisan is given attention that a European approach would perhaps see as unjustified, focussing instead on craft collectives. That this alternative focus links with the current fashion in British archaeology for the 'agency' approach is clear.

There is no obvious link, as far as I can see from citations, between Goffman and Bourdieu. Bourdieu's thinking seems almost entirely embedded in mid-late 20th century North European discourse. Yet Bourdieu wrote a tribute to Goffman on the latter's death, called 'Erving Goffman, Discoverer of the Infinitely Small' (Bourdieu 1983). Both used the 'trivial', the taken-for-granted daily interaction of individuals, to deconstruct assumptions about the 'natural' and are major contributors to the ironic trope, which characterises the discourse of the western

intelligentsia. Bourdieu, perhaps, worked from an assumption of passivity - deeply embedded dispositions which are difficult to shift, as in Braudel's *longue duree* model (Braudel 1980, originally published 1958)- and Goffman from a more opportunistic and creative set of assumptions. These differences are understandable however, in terms of their own different Habituses but both emphasise the importance of the minutiae of materiality in defining and enabling what is and is not possible for the creative individual. Here lies their strength for my research domain.

d) Evaluation and implications for research

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to set out middle range theory developed around the concept of stylistic variability and whose most recent manifestation is Carr's Unified Theory. This Unified Theory, for all its weaknesses, does attempt to place the study of a 'finds category' in a broader anthropological setting than is usual in British archaeological approaches. The potential of viewing stylistic variability from different experiential viewpoints – maker, wearer, 'other' as viewer is especially useful. It should be possible to see, for example, whether the 'low visibility' attributes, which Carr sees as more archetypical and which could be related to Bourdieu's doxic habituated responses, are more resistant to transformation than the high visibility traits.

As has been argued earlier, footwear variability as a phenomenon has particular potential in the investigation of interpersonal identity performing in the past. Partly this is due to taphonomy – it is the only organic item involved in 'impression management' that survives in quantity and is, moreover, body-shaped so that some estimate can be made about the wearer's sex and age. A further strength of the approach is that it offers an escape route from the historical metanarratives, at least in the short term. Each assemblage can be seen as representative of a micro- sociological context, the wider pattern relating to the macro. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the use of style theory stimulates questions which are not asked by those who are starting from the great

Metanarratives or High Level Theory, simply because they are too 'trivial' and 'insignificant'.

Fig 4.2 provides a model which has elements drawn from Carr, Sackett and Wiessner, in a framework which owes much to Bourdieu. The ideas, concepts and reasoning outlined in this chapter have, then, been found useful and empowering. It has enabled the formulation of a working hypothesis and offers a framework for analysis. The manner of use will be addressed in the next, and last, infrastructural, chapter. The naivety of some of the reasoning in terms of the conflict and tensions inherent in relationships of power and dominance must not, however, be forgotten. Neither must the undercurrent of assumptions about 'timeless traditional societies' be ignored. 'Constrained Indeterminacy' is most certainly the watchword.

Figure 4.2. A model based on ideas from Carr, Sackett and Wiessner.

Hypothesis:

That performativity, i.e stylistic variability, in footwear in Mid-Medieval Northern Europe will demonstrate a multiplicity of identification strategies rather than a ‘timeless traditional continuity’

IMPLICATIONS

| Carr’s Visibility Hierarchy | Wiessner/Sackett Style concepts | Change over time | Intrasite variability | Intersite variability |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Low visibility Features | Vernacular (doxic) | Minimal | Highly structured e.g. by sex | Minimal |
| Medium visibility Features | Assertive (internersonal) | Rapid | Considerable Random | Considerable Random |
| High visibility features | Emblemic (intergroup) | Rapid | Minimal Standardised | Clustered & Bounded |

Notes: For the most part, as shown in chapter 2, ‘footwear’ has been dealt with as low visibility, and interpreted as traditional and utilitarian for this period. Some attempts have been made (Hald 1972, Mould 2002) to interpret in terms of emblemic performativity, but without an adequate framework of comparative data or analytical concepts.

Chapter 5

The practice of theory: an operational research framework.

Introduction: Planning the action

In this chapter, the various strands discussed in the previous four chapters must be brought together and operationalised into research procedures. It is a matter of principle that the recursivity of the research process be fully recognised. This has been a three-year project, and to write as if practical activity, discussion and reading have not interacted in a learning curve would be dishonest and misleading. Indeed, the planning of the research from the outset involved the continuous linking of fieldwork, analysis and interpretation, just as it does with research excavations: research is a hermeneutic process and this chapter must reflect this.

The most important shift has been in the research aim itself. Three years ago, my title used the terms ‘personal and social identity’ as separate and, implicitly, opposed ‘things’ to be identified. There were, perhaps, buried assumptions about absolute criteria of personhood to be ‘discovered’ through their material manifestations. During the last three years, the emphasis has shifted increasingly to the interactive socially situated processes whereby individuals work out and spell out who they think they are – an interest in strategy rather than category. The understanding that much of this strategic activity is unconscious, habituated and deeply embedded, and that it is instantiated through the ‘trivial’ owes much to Bourdieu, and his concept of the *bodily hexis* (Bourdieu 1977: 93-4) has been at the heart of my use of footwear to develop an anthropological approach to a highly stereotyped and ideologically objectified ‘historical context’.

These shifts have, of course, meant that the 'data' itself is continuously under scrutiny in terms of its definitions. Not only does my interpretation shift and change as more footwear is recorded, but discourse with the local archaeologists and footwear specialists affects the interpretative process, dialectically. The practical research problem then becomes integrity of 'data': when comparing 'data' from assemblages recorded over a three-year time span, how valid are the comparisons? What is the solution when a feature previously thought too insignificant to be recorded becomes 'significant'? This chapter will attempt to give answers to such questions. What is extremely important is that such transformations are not seen as expedient compromises or 'excuses' for lack of foresight but as part of the hermeneutic spiral (Hodder 1992: 238-40).

In this chapter, the procedures relating to sampling will be dealt with first. This will be followed by an outlining of the development of the recording procedures and the methods of information storage. The contextualisation process will then be explained. Exploratory methods of analysis will then be outlined and a brief account of the Pilot Study will be used to arrive at a 'final design'. The conclusion will re-address the hermeneutic nature of the research.

a) Coping with Diversity: sampling approaches

Early scans of the published material on footwear revealed around 50 sites yielding footwear from the specified space and time, with a conservative estimate of around 4,000 shoes represented. Even at this stage it was evident that with sites where taphonomic conditions had been especially kind, the published footwear represented only a small part of an assemblage with huge quantities of fragments and offcuts. In other sites where the archaeological value of leather finds was increased through scarcity, even a small single offcut was assigned a small finds number and meticulously mounted. The early scans also revealed the great diversity of stylistic features and, on the whole, an absence of clear cut 'types', whatever the publications claimed (see chapter 2).

The most important preliminary tasks, then, were to work out sampling techniques for selecting assemblages, then for selecting items within assemblages and finally for selecting variables which were significant in terms of the research needs and measurable in terms of practicalities. These had to be representative of the hypothetical target population, which would be all of the footwear used by people living within the set space and time. Archaeological sampling is a tricky business at all times. In this case, the target population is physically unobtainable for taphonomic and excavational reasons, and unknowable although estimates can be made given assumptions about population density and shoe wearing habits. Even if all known footwear from the defined space and time were to be recorded, this would only represent a small proportion of the target population, and the assumption that these are representative in a statistical sense, either as local or regional assemblages, is tentative and contingent.

Before any discussion of analysis of ‘data’, the question of sampling bias needs to be addressed. Some discussion has already taken place in Chapter 2 on possible bias at the point of selection from the archives. At this point, the possibility of other kinds of bias needs to be considered. A simple calculation based on hypothesised population sizes for settlements over the time period and assuming that this soft leather footwear has a wear life of 1-5 years shows a far greater number of footwear items than has been found. For example, a settlement with average population of 1,000 shoe wearers, over 100 years, will discard as follows, based on one pair of shoes only in ownership at any one time (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Footwear Discard Model

| Period of use | Discards per year (pair discarded) | Total in 100 years |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 year | 2,000 | 200,000 |
| 2 years | 1,000 | 100,000 |
| 3 years | 666 | 66,600 |
| 4 years | 500 | 50,000 |
| 5 years | 400 | 40,000 |

What has happened to most of this footwear? Most importantly, has it disappeared in non-random ways, which could lead to misleading associations with independent variables such as sex?

The main sources of possible bias of this kind can be identified as arising from a) selective depositional decisions b) varying post depositional conditions c) selective excavation and conservation protocols.

Selective depositional bias involves consideration of disposal behaviour. The aims of this research involve wearing rather than disposal decisions but there could well be structural associations between disposal behaviour and the independent variables. It is well evidenced that the recycling of footwear leather was common – many cut fragments have been observed – and many such examples will have become unrecognisable as shoe fragments or been totally incorporated in ‘new’ footwear, repair patches or other leather items such as bags. In the later Middle Ages, this kind of activity was the task of the cobbler, the lowest grade of footwear worker (Grew & De Neergaard 1988:89), but it is quite possible that some of the very crude repair work witnessed could have been carried out by non-specialists.

To test the possibility of bias in recycling, the CUT table in the database is used, and checked against the main independent variables, time and place.

Over time, the whole sample at this stage shows virtually no variation in the proportion of cut to uncut fragments, which remains at around 25%. This does not, of course, rule out local deviations from this pattern and indeed Fig. 5.1b suggests some local contrasts in behaviour. This must be carefully checked with contextual data – it is perhaps not coincidence that York has the lowest rate of cut (recycled) shoes, coming from the Coppergate site, which seems to have been a centre for the manufacture of new shoes from new leather.

Sex and age are harder to evaluate for bias, as cut soles (presumably because they are the most worn parts of a shoe) are rare. Foot size has to be based on the less reliable upper size measurements. It would seem possible that larger footwear

(adult male), involving greater quantities of leather might be more subject to recycling than smaller footwear. The CUT findings suggest a slight bias whereby the footwear of large adults is more likely to be recycled than that of juveniles or small adults, but the numbers are too low for confidence. Biases in relation to rich/poor and ethnic-religious customary practice are also possible. Other biases might creep in through differences in disposal and must be kept in mind when interpreting distributions.

The fundamental sampling problems to do with differential survival of leather have already been outlined in Chapter 2. I think it is fair to assume that these operate in a random way, and do not select for time, age or sex in a culturally significant ways. There is, however, bias in relation to spatial factors because of the coastal-riverine distribution of waterlogged sites. This could relate, perhaps, to occupation, communication networks and other possibly significant factors. This must be kept in mind when interpretation is being carried out.

Figure 5.1a. Proportion of uppers with evidence of cutting (recycling) over time in the research area

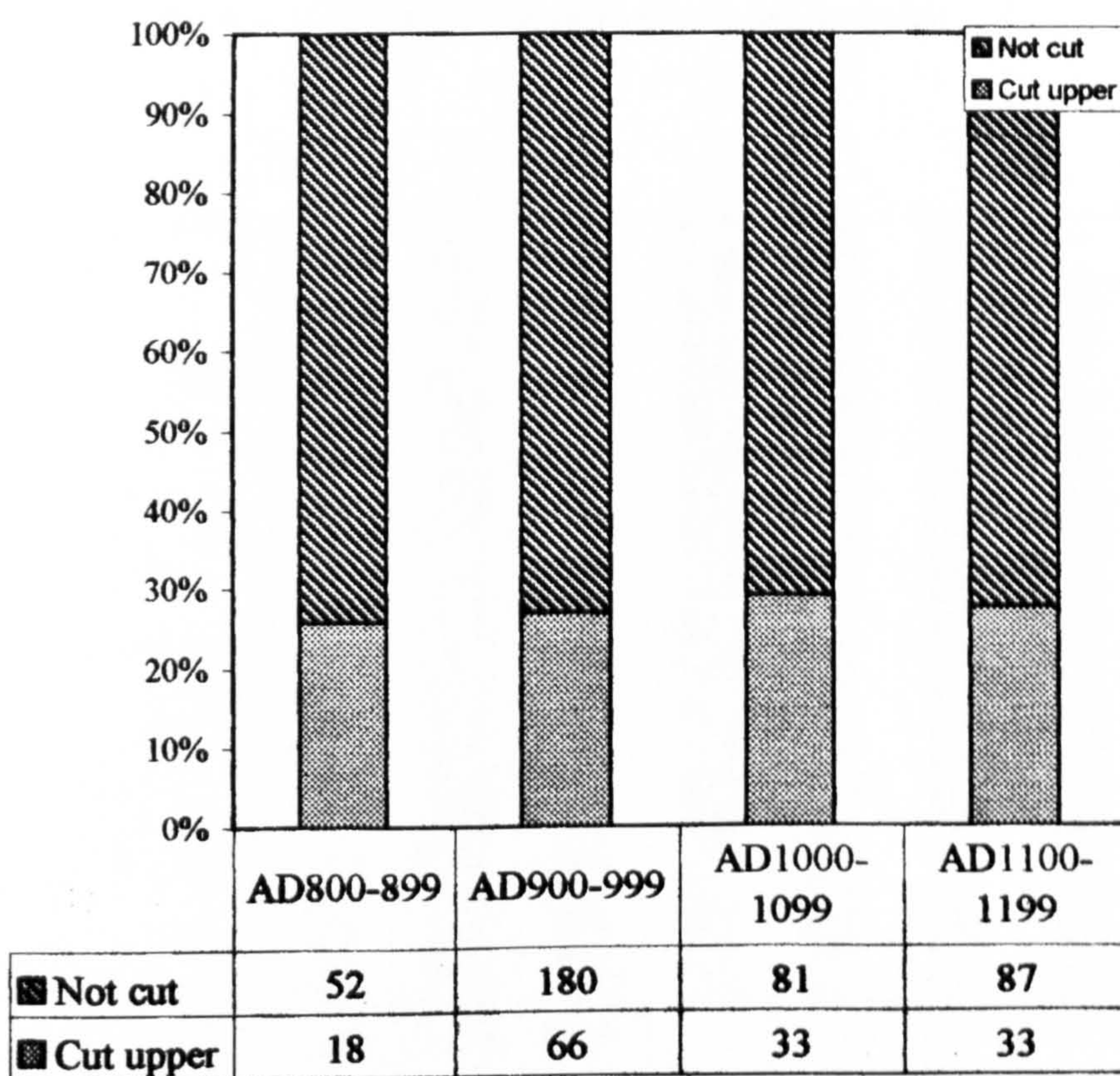
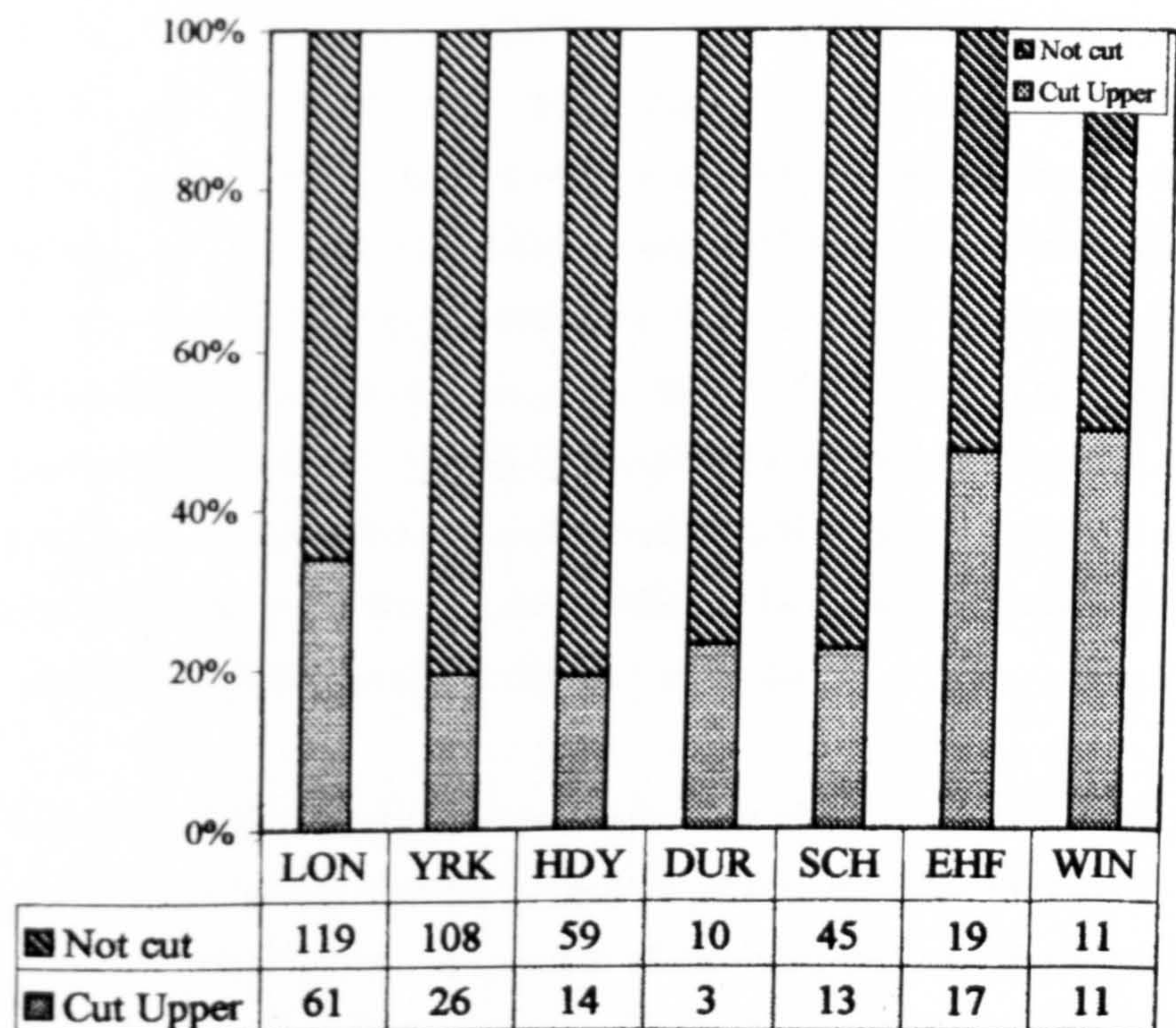


Figure 5.1b. Proportion of uppers with evidence of cutting (recycling) by place

**LON: London, YRK: York, HDY: Hedeby,
DUR: Durham, SCH: Schleswig,
EHF: Elisenhof, WIN: Winchester**



Excavational and conservational bias has been a major problem in the past. Leather has not been seen as an attractive and/or informative finds category or 'collectible', unless it has been used for a decorated scabbard or represents a complete, preferably high-status, shoe (see, for example, in Waterer 1972, 1981). Indeed, there are some interesting attitudes of actual revulsion to wet, 'smelly', leather finds amongst many field workers and a notion that they are in a real sense 'rubbish' (personal observation). Piles of footwear do have particular emotional connotations in modern imagery - see, for example the 2002 poster for the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust exhibition, and many news photographs of atrocities and accidents.

Most of the assemblages used, however, have been derived from urban rescue excavation since the 1970s and leather finds have been conscientiously retained and, with one notable exception, unselectively conserved. There is, however, considerable variation in what is then classified as 'bulk' and what is identified and set aside as a Small Find. This is true even of sites excavated under the same overall management, as was the case until recently in London. With sites where leather is relatively rare, such as Winchester or Norwich, small fragments which elsewhere would be 'bulk' are separately classified as Small Finds. On the whole, it has been possible to sample material from both bulk and small finds, thus avoiding this source of bias. Offcuts, and non-structural separate items such as drawstrings, topbands, repair patches, heel stiffeners have not been recorded for the database (although often sketched for the sample file).

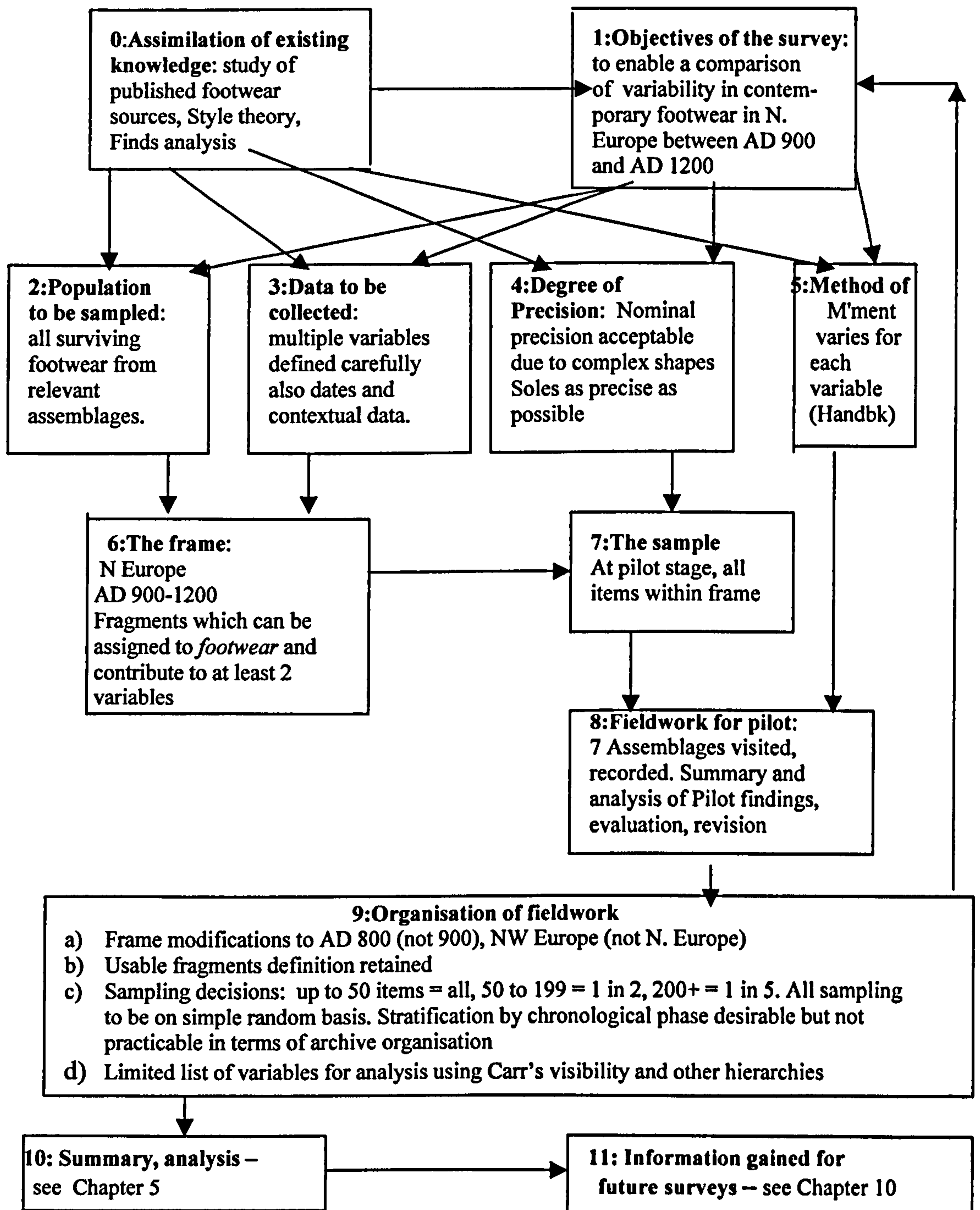
A more insuperable source of excavational bias is the obvious point that very few excavations cover a whole settlement. Only perhaps the small settlements of Elisenhof and Charavines offer a full sample of surviving footwear. Such partial excavation offers an unbiased time sequence for the area being investigated but inter-site spatial comparisons are more insecure. It is generally accepted that urban areas of this period were informally zoned by wealth, occupational interests, and possibly ethnic origin (Larsen 1992: 87-8, Biddle 1976, Clark 1989:46-7). In the pilot study, intrasite comparison of quality of footwear in London suggested a contrast between wealthier Thameside residents (merchants?) and poorer Cheapside residents (craftsmen?). Such a suggestion is

compatible with other archaeological evidence for these sites, and was based on a number of sites for each zone. Comparison for quality with contemporary Winchester which suggests a more middling situation could be misleading as the Winchester footwear came only from one rather limited site, not necessarily representative of the full range of footwear in the city at the time. Once again, archaeological contextual information is indispensable, and will be fully used in interpretation.

Acceptance, however reluctantly, that time and the politics of archive access do not permit such recording of all known footwear leads to a need for decisions. The strategy for sampling is set out in figure 5.2 and is discussed below. The establishing of the sampling frame was the first priority. The original intention was to cover a much wider area to the east and also westwards to include Norse settlements in Iceland and Greenland. This would have involved an unachievable number of visits, given time and resource limits. The choice then became one between a thin scatter of assemblages or a more restricted area where a more complete coverage was achievable. The latter option was taken up. The aim became to cover a dense network of assemblages in northwest Europe (north of Alps, west of the River Oder) and to use published material from areas beyond this in a systematic but necessarily more limited way. With one notable exception involving an inaccessible archive, St Denis, this has proved workable.

Another broad frame shift involved the chronological span, extending it earlier to include the 9th century because of a greater abundance of footwear from this period than had been previously thought. This led to a small but potentially dangerous problem in the numbering of chronological phases in the database; for the pilot study, Phase 1 started with AD 900.

Figure 5.2. Summary of the sampling strategy: adapted from Orton 2000: 27



Rather than renumber completely (with all the possible omissions and confusions), a backward numbering was used for the earlier phases, as shown in the Table 5.2 below. This numbering has been used consistently in all calculations.

Table 5.2. Numbering used for the chronological phases

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Date phases | AD800- 849 | AD850- 899 | AD900- 949 | AD950- 999 | AD1000- 1049 | AD1050- 1099 | AD1100- 1149 | AD1150- 1199 |
| Numbering in database | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Tighter decisions then needed to be taken about sampling within the assemblages. In this case, the target population is all of the footwear in the assemblage. This is not a straightforward figure. Whole shoes are no problem, but these are rare: at the very least, the taphonomic vulnerability of the thread used in most cases to join soles and uppers means that uppers and soles are only rarely still conjoined. Most items in a leather assemblage are fragmentary, sometimes in huge quantities. An early decision was to use only fragments whose original location on the shoe could be identified with reasonable certainty and which contributed information on at least two of the variables. These criteria have been used to identify the intra-assemblage sampling frame throughout without difficulty. Quite small fragments can be very informative whereas some large ones, analogous to pot body sherds, contribute nothing and are not even necessarily from footwear.

For assemblages containing no more than 50 items (defined as above), all items have been recorded. With larger assemblages, a systematic sampling approach has been used, as shown in figure 5.2 (Orton 2000: 21). Although in many cases such an approach can, by chance, systematically miss or hit regularities in the population, in this case such an occurrence seemed improbable. In archives, footwear is boxed mainly by context, which does not create numerical regularities. In many cases, administrative priorities have lead to even more

‘scrambling’. The important rule was not to ‘grab sample’ - to rummage through the boxes for ‘interesting’ items – but to count out systematically, using only the basic criteria for acceptance. To be able to stratify the sample on the basis of chronological phases, with a quota for each phase (Orton 2000: 23) would have been desirable. The cataloguing and dating of most archives, however, was so unpredictable and variable that such an attempt would have been doomed to failure. Only in the case of York – recently catalogued and tightly dated – was such a refinement possible.

Finally, the variability within the footwear needed sampling. The definition and choice of variables is, as has already been discussed, highly artificial and selective. Guidance came from existing practice in footwear studies (without any such link the published material would be unusable) and partly from my own initial surveys of footwear. As far as possible, variables were selected which reflected independent design elements, i.e. variation in one did not necessitate variation in another. This is explained in figure 5.3. Table 5.3 gives a starting framework for variables.

Figure 5.3. Independent elements in shoe construction

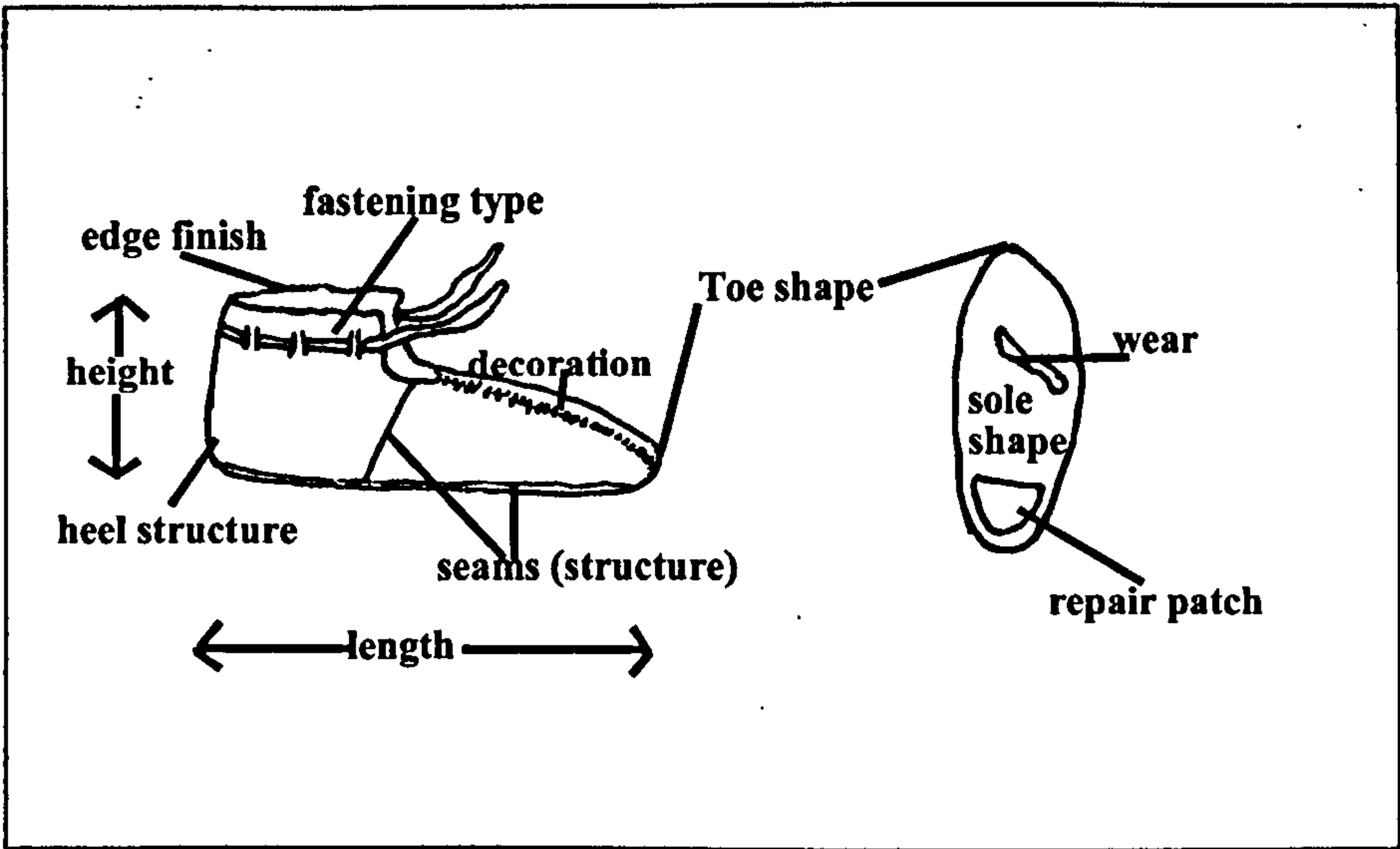


Table 5.3 Framework for variable identification

| DESIGN ELEMENT | VARIABLE (WITH SOME ILLUSTRATIVE VALUE-STATES) |
|-------------------------|---|
| MEDIUM | Media used for body of shoe/ seams/ decoration |
| | Colour of media of body of shoe/seams/decoration |
| SIZE | Absolute maximum dimensions for length/ width/ height |
| | Relative dimensions of ‘real’ foot and length/ width/height |
| SHAPE | Sole shape |
| | Toe shape (from upper) |
| | Profile of upper in terms of sloping up or down from heel |
| STRUCTURE | Number of structural pieces |
| | Overall assembly method (e.g. turnshoe/ one piece wrap/ moccasin/other) |
| | Heel structure (e.g. Round Backed or Back Pointed) |
| | Seam number and location |
| | Seam types (e.g. butt, overlap etc) |
| DECORATION | Method of application for vamp, quarter, heel |
| | Type of pattern for vamp, quarter, heel |
| | Edge finishes (e.g. topband, binding stitch) |
| | Fastening methods (e.g. drawstring, latchet) |
| REPAIR/ MODIFICATION | Character of repair /modification |
| | Relationship to need of repair /modification |

At a later stage still (post-pilot), Carr’s hierarchies were used to focus in on certain variables so that a range of visibility from low to high was covered. This is outlined towards the end of this chapter at the final decisions stage.

b) Recording and information storage

The variables were carefully defined in a handbook (Appendix 2) to ensure repeatability and consistency and trialled in a pilot study, which covered south east England, Flanders and Rouen. The evaluation of this trial resulted in some refinements and even some additions (such as an attempt to measure accurately shoe size from upper dimensions), but all of the variables showed potential for significant variation over time and place, with some clustering of particular forms into what were possibly emic types (Spaulding, quoted in Dunnell 1986: 190ff). Sole shape, on which more below, was the least variable in itself, but it was

known that this had potential for the wider field. Thus nothing was dropped, except that the CUT measure was reduced simply to present/absent as this could be assigned for all fragments. With variables such as toe shape, the nominal categories used were left as an open list for addition of new shapes, a situation that has indeed happened.

Sole shape has been from the outset seen as a profound variable. Although not strictly speaking directly visible, the shape of the sole does in fact define the overall shape of the shoe and the culturally defined 'ideal foot'. The remarkable variations in sole shape, given how 'functional' such an item appears at first thought, and the primacy of the creation of sole shape in the design and manufacture processes implied that this could be a critical locator of craftsmen in time and space. Soles have exceedingly complex and subtle shapes and in the field, no attempt was made to measure them. Instead, a template was constructed for each complete sole using soft, flexible plastic to accommodate any warp or dishing. The template extended to the rim of the sole, with special allowance being made in the rare cases when sole and upper were still attached. In one-piece shoes, the fold and wear of the soles at the upturn point formed the basis for edge of sole. With soles with extended Back Points, the Back Point was included in the template. These templates then enabled a more careful analysis of the dimensions back at base.

In many cases, a particular fragment displayed a feature, which did not fit neatly into the recording system set out above, or which displayed an idiosyncratic detail not covered in the recording scheme. These occurrences are, of course, integral to the research aims. In these cases, the feature was sketched and/or traced and, if circumstances allowed, photographed. Sometimes these examples triggered a new recording category, as with toe shape. These sketches, whilst selected in a more overtly subjective way than the 'routine' recordings, provide a useful antidote to what can become a list of numbers and codes. They acknowledge diversity and experimentation - creative mutations? - which can become overlooked in systematic data-collecting research.

The data collected was stored in a relational database, using Access. The design of the database is shown in Appendix 5. Items were allocated individual numbers and the SAMPLE table used to store information on site, context and accession numbers, proportion of shoe represented by fragment and presence/absence of signs of wear, repair and cutting. CONTEXT details such as earliest/ latest dates, kind of context and associated finds was linked in through the context details in the SAMPLE table. Each variable was assigned its own table and broken down into elements. This database underwent some modification over the research period, with the context details especially problematic in non-single context excavations (some additional elements needed).

Soles presented a particular challenge in measuring. Their shapes are particularly subtle and varied. Imposing a 'typology' seemed quite inappropriate for my needs, homogenising possible variation. Conventional measuring techniques did not seem workable, given the tapered form of many of these soles. Figure 5.4 shows one of these conventional methods next to the system devised for this research project.

This system is derived from the pottery slice method (Orton 1993:156-7) and works on the assumption that the base of the heel-end of footwear is symmetrical and foot shaped. This is really an empirically based assumption, although functional explanations can be offered. Figure 5.5 shows the remarkable variety possible in European sole shapes yet also confirms the unvarying shape of the heel part. A central base point is established and this is used to seat the sole into a right angle, which will then give a vertical axis. Measurements are then carried out as shown in figure 5.4b above. The establishment of an axis allows statistical assessment of symmetry and the sequential arrangement of measurements allows assessment of instep waisting. The axis is also useful for giving comparable length dimensions. The areas of sole defined by the slice grid could also be given a grading for proportion of wear (wear being defined as the presence of actual holes.)

Wear and sole dimensional data were stored in ACCESS tables, but the sole data was transferred into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to permit the use of more advanced statistical analysis (see later).

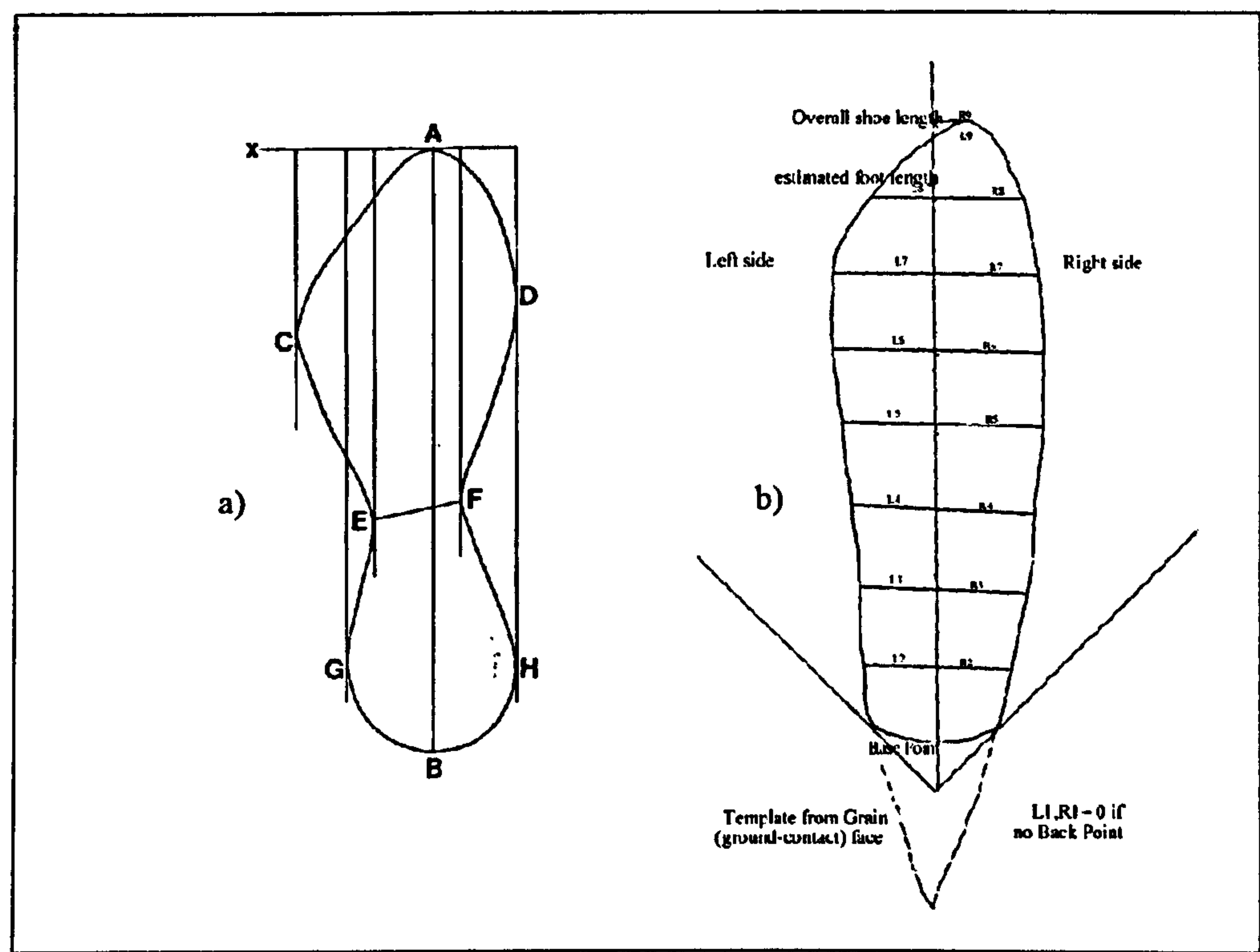


Figure 5.4. Different strategies for recording sole shape

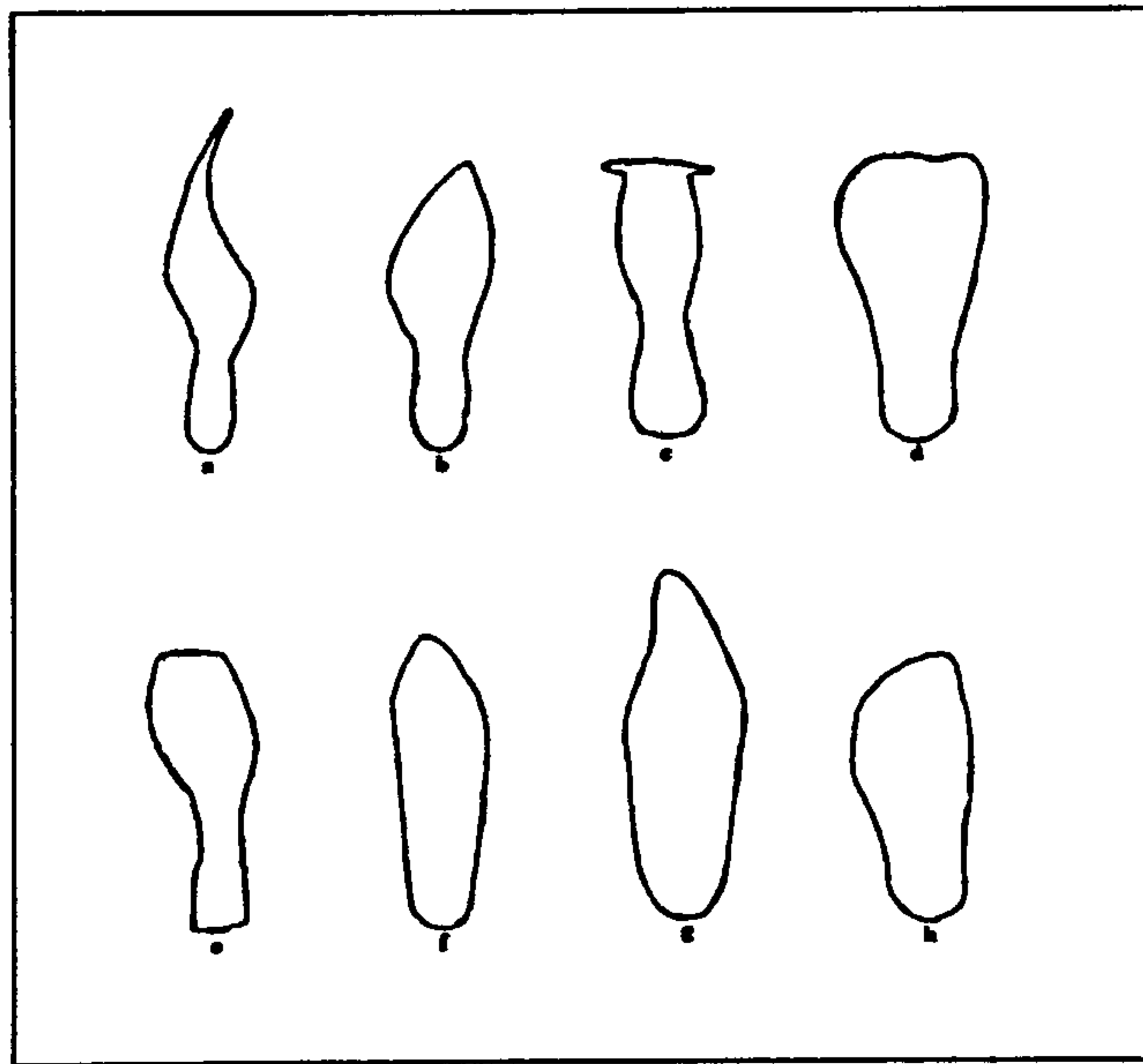


Figure 5.5. Variation in sole shape. Example (h) is an unshod foot.

With some refinement and additions, the handbook, sample book and database have served well throughout this research. The handbook in particular has been invaluable in maintaining a consistent and rigorous standard of recording throughout. I have needed and used it right up until the last archive visit, and it has also been used for recording data from the secondary sources

c) Contextualisation.

Contextualisation has been a continuous process throughout the project. In the cases of the assemblages selected for first hand recording, detailed accounts of excavations have been investigated and discussed with the local archaeologists and archivists during and after visits. Attention has been paid particularly to the basis for establishing chronological sequences and absolute dates, and has been most revealing (see chapter 2). As mentioned in Chapter 3, in every case, I have come under pressure to supply dating information from the ‘typological’ evidence of the shoes, a situation that highlights yet again the contingent and recursive nature of ‘contexts’.

The discourses, formal and informal, at various conferences, have been very useful. In relation to publications, there are difficulties associated with dealing with so many different languages, but these are not insoluble, especially in light of the decision to use only photographs and drawings. A greater practical problem has been to do with tracking down obscure publications cited in chain-mode by footwear specialists (see chapter 2 on stochastic drift) and this has been only partially successful: Izjumova's original work on Staraya Ladoga and Novgorod remain unfound.

Contextualising from historical evidence has been more passive. The location and recording of representational material is not in itself difficult, as medieval 'art' features to a cultic extent in many art history publications (e.g. Durliat 1982, Oakeshott 1981, Temple 1976) and museum displays. It is also incorporated in popular archaeological and historical texts (e.g. Duran 1966, Savage 1997, Graham-Campbell 1980). More interestingly for my purposes, many representations of the human body created during the later part of the research period are still in situ on cathedral facades etc, enabling a more phenomenological evaluation of the visibility of the portrayal. The main problem with representations has rather been one of systematic sampling and selection, rather than expediency. Another serious difficulty has related to my inability to identify a discourse which involves the anthropology of the iconography – in terms of its creation, dissemination, censoring, experiencing by different people. Thus only a limited use of this rich area is possible in this study: a strategy to cope with this is outlined in chapter 8.

Documentary evidence presents similar problems of coverage. Whilst every attempt has been made to read relevant contemporary annals, e.g. Dutton 1952, Savage 1997, Stow 1956, these are necessarily in translation. Whilst for the earlier part of the research period the number of texts is limited and manageable, by the 12th century the sheer quantity makes selection inevitable and this has not been as guided as I would have liked. The lack of anthropological/sociological approaches for this period, except in the sense used by inquiry-based historians (see Chapter 3 part b) has also been a problem. As it is, work on gender, class,

rural-urban relationships, folk-identities etc seems to remain partial and fragmentary for this 'timeless traditional' period. Thus for the purposes of this project, social contextualisation has been treated as highly provisional.

Finally, there is the question of the environmental contextualisation. Again, for this period and area, the pre-assumption seems to be one of unchanging geography: this is not so. Apart from population growth (estimated for Europe as from around 15 million in AD900 to around 42 million in 1200- Barraclough 1979:120) and settlement changes (the 12th century clearances of much woodland for settlement in some areas and the privatisation through hunting forest creation in others for example) there were clearly shifts and changes of a less human-derived kind. Physical evidence, based on e.g. pollen types, river and lake levels, suggests marked climatic variation over this period in Northern Europe. The 10th-11th centuries experienced warmer and drier conditions than the 9th and 12th centuries: indeed Heidinga suggests a 'little optimum' around the millennium and the beginnings of the 'Little Ice Age' in the 12th century (Heidinga 1987:124f, Colardelle & Verdel 1993:403f). Furthermore, post-glacial changes of sea level and the effects of isostatic recovery affected the coastline in ways that were far from inconsequential for coastal peoples. (Heidinga & van Regteren 1989)

In the Annales School approach, most notably in Braudel's famous *Mediterranean*, (Braudel 1956) historical analysis starts with the environment, and a version centred on the North Sea- Baltic Sea would have been most useful at this point. I do not pretend to have investigated the environmental context in any kind of detail, but its potential importance has not been forgotten.

d) Initial Exploration

A number of simple 'derived' categories were calculated from the recorded data through the course of the project, as possible patterns began to show. This includes profile (back to front slope of ankle area), graded categories for the density and size of binding stitch and an index to compare width-height of Back

Pointed soles. There were, however, also some 'derived' measures which were more problematic and involved estimates, which are more arguable. The most important one involves quantification of context date ranges, but other important ones relate to foot length and quality measures. These are all important because they are, in this statistical context, independent variables, which can be used to explore the stylistic variability of the footwear.

Because the project is using comparisons over space and time, the question of establishing the contemporaneity of footwear has to be tackled. In chapter 2 a section was devoted to discussing the considerable difficulties with this. The situation, however, is that for all of the recorded footwear, at worst a broad but reliable date range was available. Footwear dated solely by its own 'typological' evidence such as that from the Danish bogs was not recorded. A 'lifetime memory' span of 50 years was selected as representing contemporaneity. For each date span, a mid date was taken as representative and the footwear allocated to a specific 50-year time span 'phase'. For some assemblages with close dating this was not problematic. For others, the midphase date was potentially very misleading. To enable distinction to be made when using the database, a precision category was also allocated to each context, so that the grosser compromises could be set aside if desired.

Foot length is a crucial clue to the maturity and sex of the wearer. Heel width can also be useful. Size of foot has a clear relationship to body size although perhaps not quite as directly as one would hope. Adult foot sizes follow a normal distribution for each sex, which overlaps to a greater or lesser degree depending on the degree of sexual dimorphism, itself possibly related to cultural factors (Molleson 1994). The footwear of the immature gives this bimodal distribution a long one-way tail. Sexual differentials in age of reaching physical maturity add further complications. Nevertheless, it is possible with some reliability to identify children's footwear, and that of large adults (mostly male) and small adults (mostly female but also including adolescent boys and small men). The most arguable element here involves the estimation of foot length from shoes.

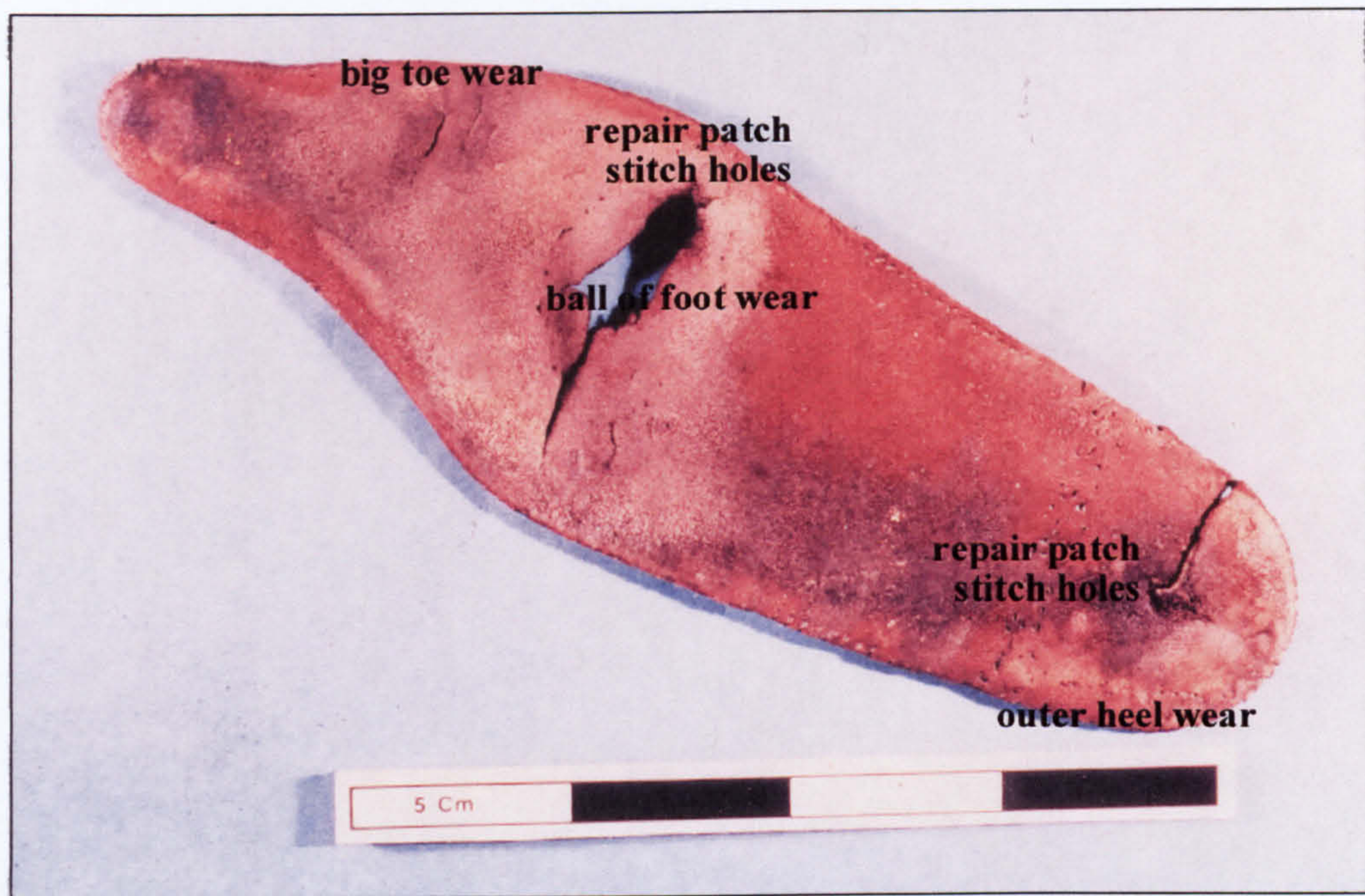


Figure 5.6. London (Guildhall Yard) sole with interpretation of wear marks to assist estimation of foot length..

The problem lies in the fact that shoes by no means directly reflect the shape of the foot. Toe elongation is the commonest problem, especially where the toe area is (unlike the foot) perfectly symmetrical. In the case of soles, there is, fortunately, often a clear wear mark where the big toe has pressed against the soft leather. Other wear patterns are also helpful in charting where the foot and shoe engaged – see figure 5.6.

The relationship between toe shape and foot can be transferred to soles of similar shape, which do not have helpful wear marks. The continuous measurements thus obtained can be assigned to foot length categories, as the need requires. Foot size based on uppers is much less reliable, and in the early stages of this research (for the pilot study) was not attempted. In the later stages, measurements were made of total length/ toe-throat and throat-heel lengths as appropriate but it is extremely difficult to be confident about the reliability of the accuracy of this method, or about the relationship of upper fragment to foot length. At best, it gives child/smaller adults/larger adults, which is better than nothing.

Quality measures have been devised to explore variability associated with the performative display of wealth and/or social status. This is an arguable relationship – see above- but the comparative tracking of investment in footwear through a calculation of ‘work done’ was worth trying. After discussion with a professional maker of reproduction medieval footwear on timing of the various manufacturing processes, values based on relative time to do work were allocated, as in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Scoring for Quality Index (QI).

| Variable | Maximum score |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Number of seams | 8 |
| Binding stitch | 6 |
| Back Pointed heel | 3 |
| Fastenings | 4 |
| Decoration | 8 |
| Maximum score for shoe | 29 |

For each fragment a Quality index QI was calculated using work done score divided by maximum possible score from that fragment. The highest possible value was 1. The validity of this index is based on the assumption that footwear taking longer to make because of extra features such as decoration or complex seaming would cost more than a simple shoe. Value of the material itself and aesthetic judgements could not be used.

e) Analysis

A wide range of bivariate statistical methods are then used to examine the relationship of footwear variable values to each other (looking for repeated associations, i.e. emic types) and the relationship of variable values to the independent variables of time, space, maturity and sex of wearer and investment (social status?) of the wearer. This involves in particular the use of scatter graphs, followed through with contingency tests, although histograms and box plots are also used as relevant.

At the same time in the early stages, the usefulness of the sole measurements was tested using multivariate methods available through SPSS. For this, all sole measurements are converted to the same scale by dividing each by shoe length and converted to the same laterality (all as right-foot) by laterally inverting all those identified as left soles though examination of the width relationships either side of the central axis in the ball of the foot area (measurements 5, 6 and 7).

At the pilot stage, an experimental test of the workability of this approach was carried out using Discriminant Analysis for a sample of 30 Roman, 30 Saxon and 30 later medieval soles randomly selected from the London archive and reliably dated into the 3 groups. All items had been freeze dried so the relative measurements were comparable and no shrinkage weighting was applied. The method was run using both the standardised measurements themselves and Principal Components (see below) derived from these measurements. In both cases, allocation of the soles based on the measurements to the previously assigned chronological groupings was 90% correct, and highest (94%) for the Saxon soles. This provided reassurance about the usefulness of the recording system for permitting identification of chronologically distinctive shapes. The wrongly placed soles were of generalised 'blob-shoe' character.

Statistical experimentation also involved the use of Principal Component Analysis, (PCA) which was intended to summarise statistically the variation contained within the 18 sole measurements. The suspicion with sole shape is that its subtleties can be reduced or summarised to a much smaller number of variables or underlying structures, to use Norusis' term. Principal Components Analysis (PCA) is a form of factor analysis, based on correlation matrices i.e based on the assumption that '.... underlying dimensions or factors can be used to explain simple phenomena' (Norusis 1990: 322). To quote Shennan, '....it is a way of disentangling complex patterns of variations, which are not easily assimilated' (Shennan 1997: 268). PCA only works properly with measurements, which are in the same form, have comparable scales and which have a reasonably high degree of correlation but are not compositional (Bryman & Cramer 1997: 279, Baxter 1994: 63-66). These requirements are met here. Sample size is another issue: Bryman & Cramer (1997: 279), following Gorsuch,

recommend a ratio of 5 cases to 1 variable. With the 18-variable sole analysis, this means a sample size of at least 90 and the total sole sample for the research is 314. Principal Components (PCs) themselves can be plotted as scatter graphs against independent variables (recommended by Shennan 1997: 295) and, with due caution, used in cluster analysis, e.g. K-means (Baxter 1994: 85-90).

Sole shape, as explained above, is a good candidate for PCA. The dimensions meet the mathematical requirements and pilot study runs showed the identification of 4 PCs, which accounted for 87% of the variability. SPSS enables speedy calculation and also the application of K-means cluster analysis. The pilot study suggested a remarkable consistency in sole shape over the area studied, until the late 11th century, suggesting that this is a deeply habituated and shared instantiation of what a foot should look like. This certainly deserved following through for the whole research area. It proved possible to supplement the database reliably using published sole shapes, with provisos about bias from publication sampling, representation and conservation shrinkage factors.

PCA is not suitable for the categorical (nominal) upper variables.

Correspondence Analysis (CA) is claimed to perform the same condensing and simplifying process for categorical data, enabling investigation of relationships that would be obscure in large data sets. (Shennan 1997: 308-345). CA is based on similarity – difference measures (distances from mean) and significance testing using chi squared, and has become popular in recent years in archaeology for multiple variable artefact pattern study, which is the situation here. One of the major advantages is that through the concept of *inertia* the strength of associations can be investigated, not simply the strength of the *probability* of the association. Another summarising approach uses Principal Coordinates Analysis (PCO). (Shennan 1997: 345-7) PCO defines the low-dimensional space being sought in terms of similarities between the units (in this case, contemporary assemblages) rather than in terms of the variables themselves (Shennan 1997: 346). In both cases, however, each variable e.g. toe type or fastening type will have to be considered separately for each chronological period, to meet the aims of the project.

These approaches were used in a pilot study during the first year, which lead to a firming up of the research design in many ways.

f) Pilot study and final design.

The central research question was investigated on a pilot basis using a small number of adjacent footwear-producing sites shown in Figure 5.7 Table 5.5 shows the relative sizes of the samples from these sites and the chronological range covered. It should be noted that only the London and Winchester assemblages cover the whole time span, also that the London assemblage is overwhelmingly larger than the others and is the only one large enough to justify sub-site analysis. All of the assemblages consisted of many fragments identifiable as footwear. 44 complete shoes were all 10th-early 11th century, as during this period in this area shoes were stitched together with leather thongs, which have survived in situ. From the mid 11th century onwards, taphonomically vulnerable thread was used. Many fragments of shoes and offcuts produced in the making and repairing processes were present. Using the selection criteria set out above, a total count of 889-shoe/ shoe equivalents of known context were identified. Sampling issues did not arise at this stage, as it was possible to record all archived footwear for all sites.

Figure 5.7. Map of Pilot Study Domain

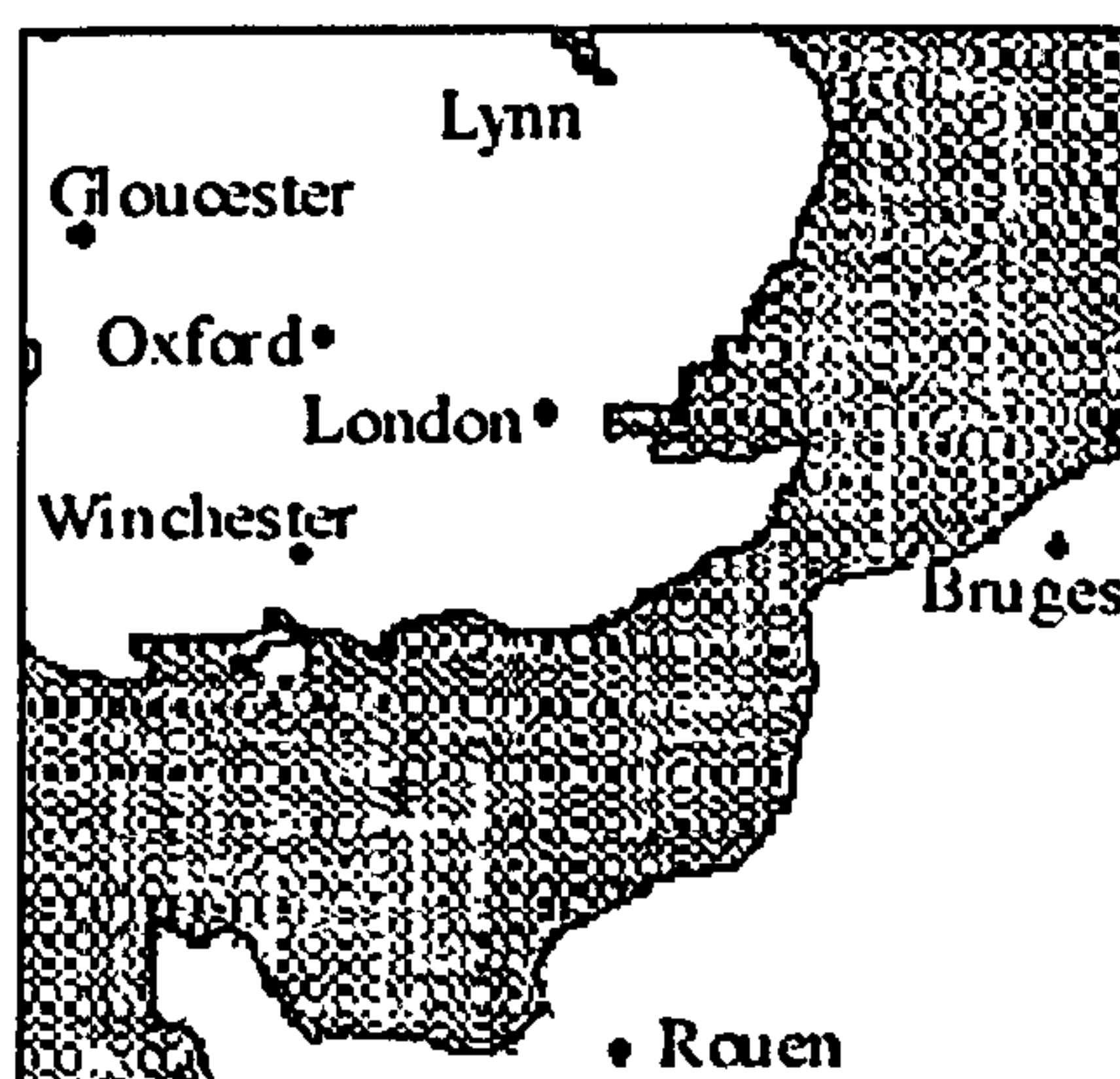


Table 5.5. The Pilot sample

| Assemblage origin (sites) | Earliest date in research period (circa) | Latest date in research period (circa) | Sample size for research period |
|--|---|---|--|
| London (14) | AD 900 | AD1200 | 695 |
| Gloucester (1) | AD850 | AD950 | 8 |
| Winchester (3) | AD850 | AD1200 | 53 |
| Oxford (1) | AD750 | AD850 | 15 |
| Rouen (2) | AD800 | AD1200 | 50 |
| Bruges (2) | AD900 | AD1000 | 45 |
| King’s Lynn (2) | AD1150 | AD1250 | 23 |
| Total in sample | | | 889 |

Relational aspects were addressed, using contingency tables and chi squared tests of significance. Very few firm relationships were found, either positive or negative, except between material used, shape and basic structure for the period up until the late 11th century: these variable states were universal throughout the period in all places and include the leather as material, the symmetrical tapered sole (until the end of the period) and the turnshoe method of construction. The symmetry was enhanced in many cases by a central vamp stripe, usually embroidered but sometimes impressed in the 10th century: this feature increased in popularity over time but occurred with the same frequency throughout the pilot domain. The Back Pointed Heel and Round Backed Heel were also found at the same time throughout the domain and although Back Points became more popular in the late 10th century and faded out by the early 12th century, the proportion again remained consistent. These distributions can therefore be seen as *uniform-unbounded*.

Other distributions were more complex. The more ostentatious wrap around variant of the Back Point had a more restricted distribution - early London with a single example from Gloucester. Table 5.6 summarises these distributions, on the basis of frequencies rather than simple presence/absence.

One unexpected correlation that emerged was a link in all assemblages between the distinctive Back Point and small adult/juvenile sizes, shown in figure 5.8.

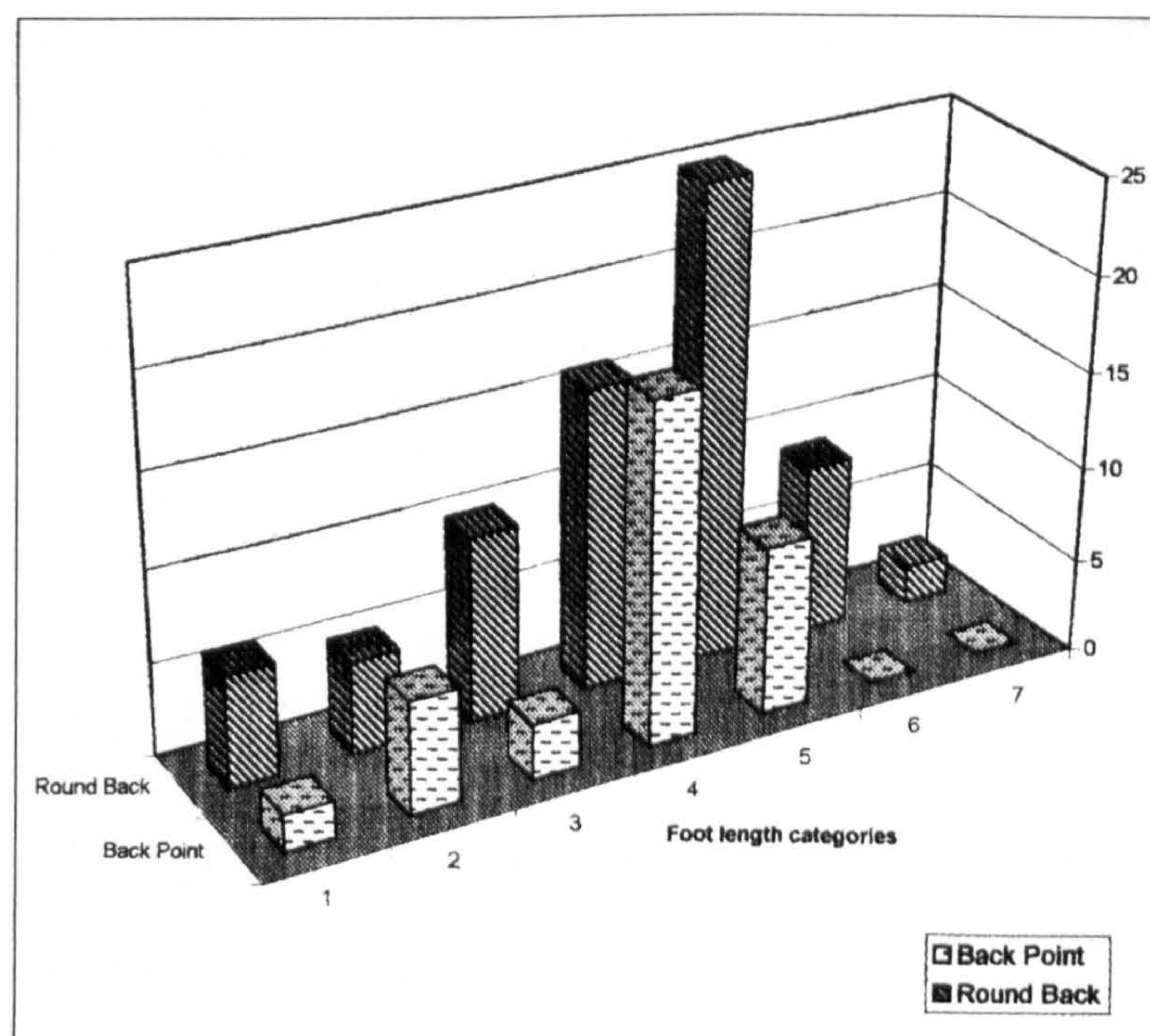
Background reading including Hald, had claimed the Back Point as some kind of Scandinavian ‘ethnic’ indicator. Now, not only had its 10th century popularity in London seemed to go against this assumption, but also the statistical link with a particular range of foot sizes pointed in the direction of a sex/gender link. The heel area of a shoe is relatively low visibility and using Carr tentatively, his ‘diagnosis’ for a uniform unbounded low visibility variable value is that it relates to deep archetypal structures, taken-for-granted but not trivial. So far, so good.

Table 5.6. Variable states, hierarchies and distribution types for Pilot Study

| VARIABLE | STATES USED | CARR'S HIERARCHIES | | | DISTRIBUTION |
|----------------------|---|--------------------|----------------|--------------|--|
| | | VISIB. | DES. | PROD. | |
| Seam media | Leather thong or thread | Low | Low | Medium | Patchy-bounded |
| Absolute length | [Continuous] | Low | Low | High | Uniform |
| Absolute width | , | „ | „ | „ | „ |
| Absolute height | „ | „ | „ | „ | „ |
| Relative length | „ | High | High | High | Bounded |
| Relative width | „ | High | High | High | Uniform |
| Relative height | „ | High | High | High | Bounded/clinal? |
| Sole shape (not toe) | A) Tapered or waisted B) Symmetrical or asymmetrical | Low High | Medium High | High High | Uniform until late 11 th . Then random? |
| Toe shape | Graded 1-5 from rounded to gently pointed. 6 and 7 involve shaped extensions. | High | High? | High | Uniform over space, gradual shift 1 to 5 over time. In late 11 th , random? |
| Profile | Continuous based on height differential quarter /back | Medium | Medium | High | Uniform until mid 11 th – then bounded |
| Pieces | Count. | Low | Low | High | Uniform |
| Assembly method | Turnshoe/ moccasin/ one-piece wrap around / other | Low | Low? | High | Uniform with one marked bounded exception |
| Heel structure | Round back or Back Point. Back Point subdivides: inset or wrapped | Low | ?? | High | Uniform, except for wrapped BP: bounded? |
| Seam number | Count | Low | Low | Medium | Uniform |
| Seam type | Butt/ overlap/ turnshoe/ tunnel seam/ other | Low | Low | Medium | Uniform mostly some random variation. |
| Method vamp dec | Embossed / engraved/ | Low/low | Low | Low | Uniform |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| | embroidered/ open worked/ painted/ other | /med /high/med | | | |
| Method quarter dec | „ | | | | Uniform |
| Method heel deck | „ | | | | Uniform |
| Pattern vamp | Single/double/treble stripes. Parallel or fanned | High | ?? | Low | Uniform |
| Pattern quarter | Stripes | Low | ? | Low | Random |
| Pattern heel | Combination dashes, circles, lines | Low | ? | Low | Random/ bounded? |
| Edge finishes | Topband/ Binding stitches/ cut edge | Med/ low | Low | Low | Complex - clinal?? |
| Binding detail | Stitch frequency, stitch size | Low | Low | Low | Clinal?? Consistent change over time |
| Fastening devices | None present (slip-on), drawstring/ latchet and toggle/ latchet and thong/ others. | Medium | Medium | High | Uniform but becoming bounded over time |
| Repair character | Patch/ slits/ loops/ resole/ other | Varies. Low for sole repair. | Not included | Not included | Uniform |
| Need relationship | Wear evidence/ tear evidence | Varies | Not included | Not included | Random |

Figure 5.8. The relationship between Back Point presence and foot size in the Pilot Study



A startling discovery was a highly unusual and distinctive design represented in 14 shoes, most of which were found in one context, i.e. the lowest level of a roadway laid out during the recolonisation of the ruined Roman city of London. These shoes, shown in figure 5.9, differed drastically from any others found in the pilot zone, beyond the basic ‘absolutes’ of material and shape. This kind of elaborate one-piece cut owes more to Roman traditions than those of the Mid-Medieval period and, on knowledge at the pilot stage, was paralleled only by pre-Scandinavian shoes from Ireland. (See Lucas 1956: 366-71) These shoes, known as Asymmetrical One-Pieces (AOPs) were the only sharply and wholly bounded group of shoes in zone 1, but in a fine-scale context. The distinctiveness of AOPs was displayed through the whole range of visibility and planning values and must have been actively emblematic in the context in which they were worn. Careful inspection of stitching patterns suggests that AOPs were made by one person or in one tightly run workshop. The significance of these shoes lies not only in their special character but also in how, through their deviance, AOPs contribute to a realisation of the underlying deep conformity of the other shoes of the time in London and elsewhere in the Pilot domain.

A detailed account of variability of footwear in London, including suggested chronological sequence and interpretation of variations has been published in *London Archaeologist* (Reid 2001). The seeming stylistic isolation of London in the late 10th and early 11th centuries, at least as far as the more visible features were concerned, was a clear research priority for the next stage of research. From the mid tenth century onwards, London showed a much greater diversity of styles than other centres – before this time Bruges seemed more innovative. This diversity may, however, simply be a function of the sheer size of the London footwear assemblage.

The quality measure did show some variation within London. The more ‘expensive’ footwear was more likely to be found in the Thameside areas and the cheaper and more heavily worn in the Cheapside area, hinting at a waterside location for the wealthier.

Figure 5.9. Asymmetrical One-Piece shoes (AOPs)

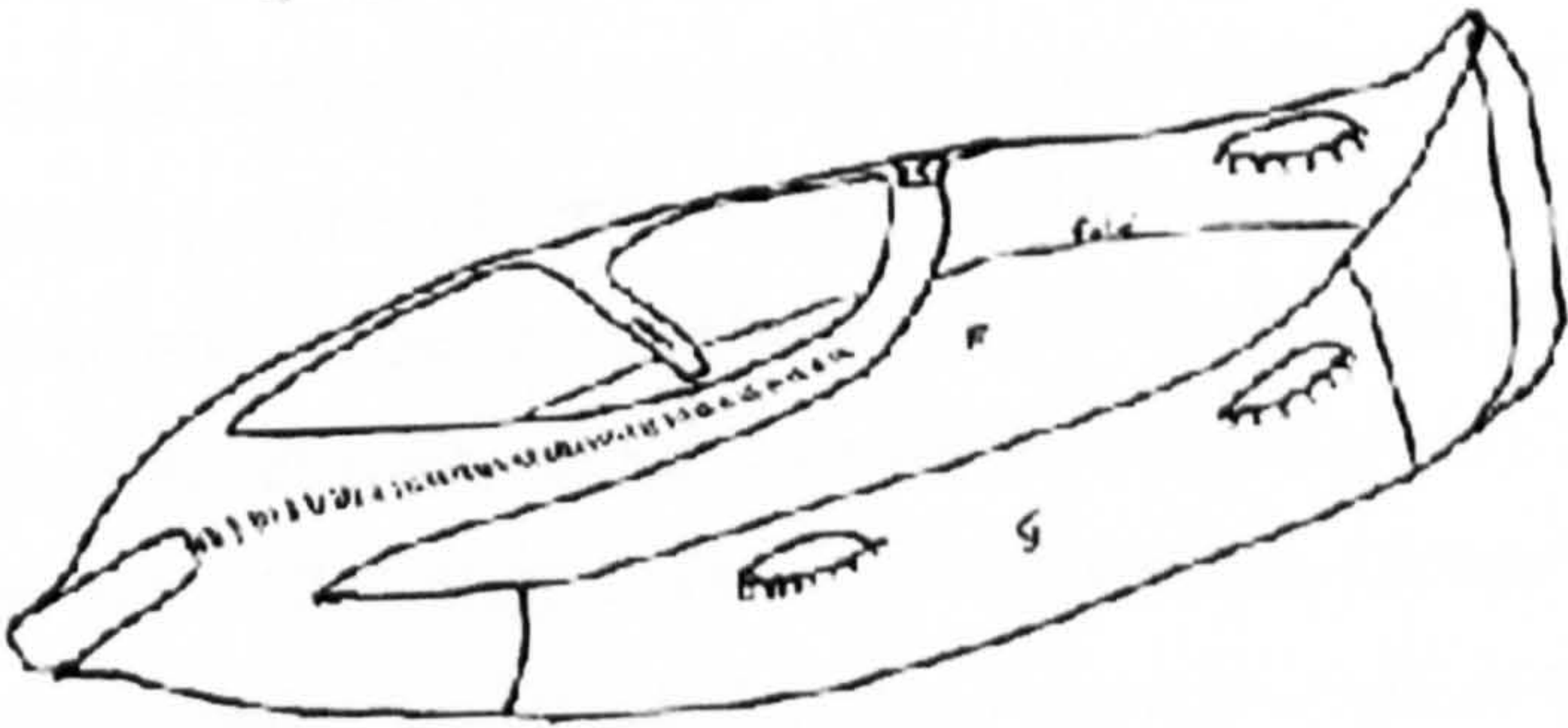
Image removed due to third party copyright



a) AOP example from Number One Poultry
<1038> [7074]

b) Reconstruction of cut

c) Reconstruction of whole shoe



merchants and a population of poorer craftsmen etc on Cheapside. This is covered in more detail in the *London Archaeology* article (Reid 2001: 274).

The degree of basic similarity across this pilot research domain was greater than I had expected, having been distracted by the highly visible variations. This is particularly marked in the early phase. In the middle phase, the basic similarity continues but is masked by conspicuous preferences in latchets and innovatory fastening types in London: contemporary with relatively conservative styles of footwear in Winchester. Whilst every Winchester variable state can be paralleled in London, the reverse is not true: none of the innovatory London styles are found in Winchester. The analysis above implies a deep continuity – a shared *Habitus* - across the whole pilot area regardless of what might be presented as ‘ethnic differences’. These dispositions generate taken-for-granted ways of doing in relation to material choices, shape, structure and decoration in relation to constructing the foot. Some of the variable states within this seem to be related to deep-seated identification processes, especially the possible Back Point association with women.

The pilot study did seem to confirm the value of examining the footwear in a systematic and rigorous way. The accessibility of archive material and the helpfulness and interest of archivists and local archaeologists were confirmed and from this stage on, a policy of sending a short initial summary of findings to each archive was followed i.e. the research began to contribute to the contextualisation process. Some other relatively minor adjustments were also made, for example the conversion of the CUT diagnosis to presence/ absence. It also, however, highlighted certain major issues, which had to be resolved before the main stage of the research was carried out.

One related to the sheer quantity of variables and values. Although not a problem at the recording stage, where a systematic approach enabled fast and accurate work, the number of possible relationships was enormous. The decisions were taken to follow Carr’s insights to some extent and use his visibility hierarchy to make a selection of variables to cover the range of visibility, as set out below in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Variable states and hierarchies used in analysis

| VARIABLES | VALUES USED | VISIBILITY | DESIGN | PRODUCTION |
|---|--|------------|--------|------------|
| Sole shape (not toe) | 18 dimensions, simplified to 4 Principal Components | ? | High | High |
| Toe shape | Graded 1-5 from rounded to gently pointed. 6 and 7 involve shaped extensions. | High | High? | High |
| Coverage of foot and lower leg | Boot/ ankle shoe/ pump | High | High | High |
| Vamp decoration (Execution and Pattern) | Embossed / engraved/ embroidered/ open worked/ painted/ other. Also Single/double/treble stripes. Parallel or fanned/ other forms. | Medium | Low | Low |
| Fastening devices | None present (slip-on), drawstring/ latchet and toggle/ latchet and thong/ others. | Medium | Medium | Medium |
| Pieces | Count. | Low | Low | High |
| Heel structure | Round back or Back Point. Back Point subdivides: inset or wrapped | Low | High | High |

The prioritising of variables was based on evidence from contemporary representations. In these, the shape of the toe and the coverage of foot/lower leg are always clearly displayed and, indeed, in many cases are the only information conveyed about the footwear (see, for example, footwear in the Bayeux Tapestry). Vamp decoration is sometimes shown, especially in the later phases (11th - 12th centuries) though fastening methods are only rarely readable from the portrayals. Heels are almost always out of sight and, apart from the turnshoe seam where sole and upper are joined, joining seams are hardly ever shown. These generalisations hold even with 3 dimensional tomb effigies and Romanesque cathedral statuary: although much detail is shown the view is from front or side with toe and vamp prominent and heel concealed (See Chapter 8 illustrations for examples). In short, I have made a conscious attempt to use what was actually seen by the portrayers of the time, rather than make modern ‘common sense’ decisions.

Within each range category, 2 variables were to be used and final choices were made according to recording reliability. Without Carr's Middle Range insights, I think I would have gone entirely for High Visibility with a taken-for-granted assumption about their significance. Soles, however, do not fit Carr's thinking – although of low visibility in the wearing context, their shape in fact structures the whole shape of the shoe and must have come very high in the manufacturing hierarchy, perhaps even the first stage conceptually and practically. Other 'support' variables such as presence of cut edges and fineness of binding stitch, however, continued to be recorded.

A second issue related to the analysis of information from uppers in relation to spatial distribution. The patchiness of assemblage distributions due to taphonomic factors alone meant that the mapped information was confusing. A final independent variable deriving from geographical distribution and measuring propinquity was set up. Distances between each site were measured for a) direct distance and b) distance using water transport (coastal waters and rivers). For the latter, all assemblages except one came from sites on known waterway routes. It was felt that this aspect would, in this way, become less subject to over interpretation. A further measure of similarity/ difference between contemporary assemblages using upper information was also pinpointed. This involves use of the Brainerd Robinson Similarity Matrix, and preliminary testing suggested that within the pilot area, Bruges had the least degree of similarity with other assemblages. The products of the similarity index – which, of course, also measures difference- worked out for the more limited list of variables identified above could then be examined against the independent variables using Principal Coordinates Analysis. This method, using an Institute of Archaeology programme (IASTATS), was decided upon in preference to the more modern Correspondence Analysis.

Finally, sampling issues had to be tackled. On reflection, the huge sample taken from London seemed unnecessary for this research project. Although it did have its important uses, in terms of a contribution to London's archaeology (only a tiny proportion of this footwear had been published or indeed, looked at beyond

initial archiving) its size gives it a dominance that creates pitfalls in analytical procedures. Practical constraints would not permit such exhaustive coverage at other big assemblages such as York, Dublin and Hedeby neither was it necessary. The decisions taken are shown in Figure 5.2.

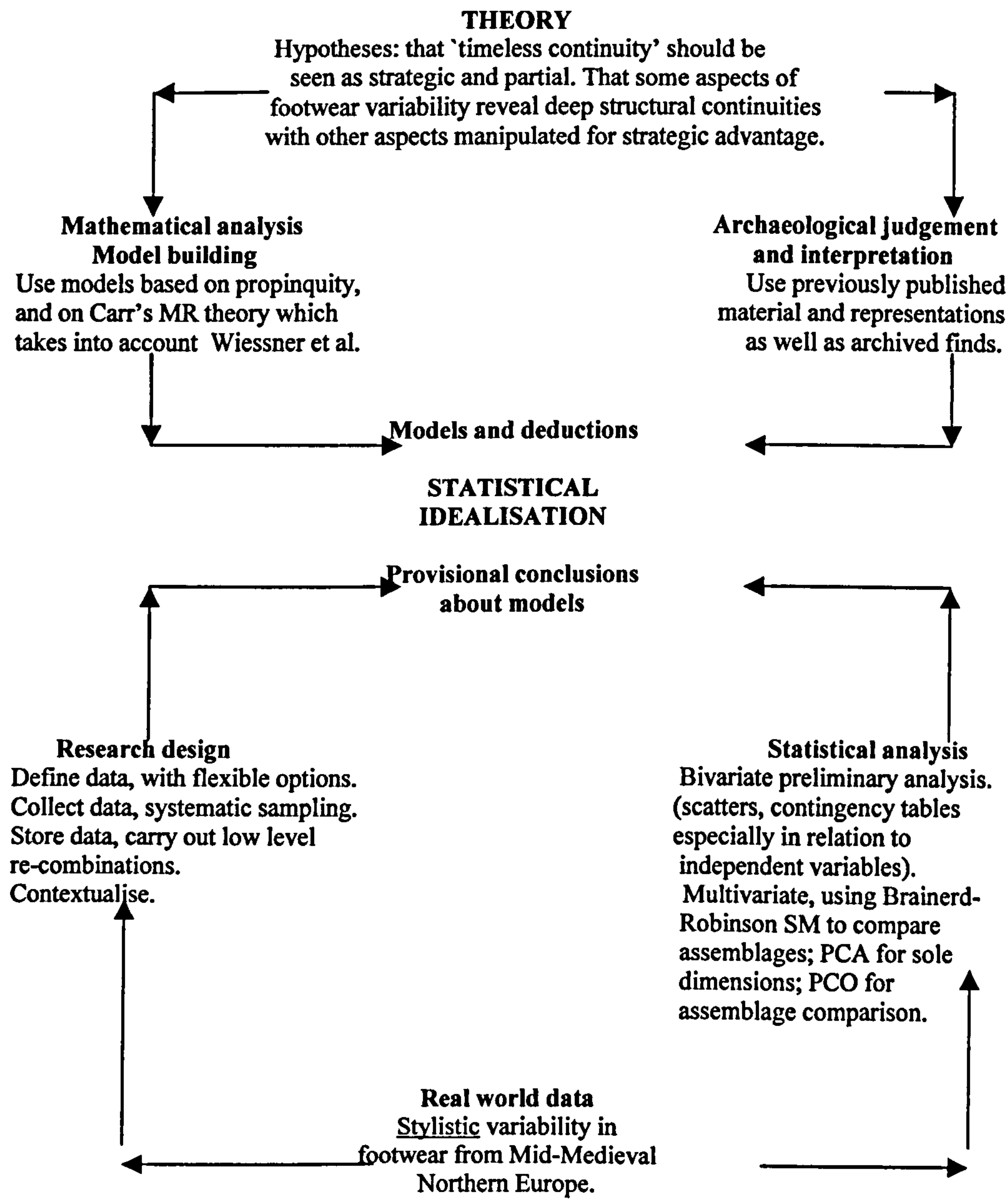
The research plan used for the main research period is shown in fig 5.10. The theoretical side should be seen as representing the thinking at the mid point of this research project, after development and modification as discussed above. Although this thinking has continued to change and the research model should not be seen as fixed, certain elements have been consistent. One of these is the consistency of recording, thanks to the handbook and a sound database design, which could be modified without losing integrity. Another has been adherence to the time-space framework and a continued adherence to the Habitus model and the centrality of 'bodily hexis'. New thinking will become apparent in the interpretative aspects of the next major section.

Final Comments

This chapter has attempted to show the hermeneutic aspects of this research project in a transparent and honest way. Obviously, a great deal of detail has been omitted. It does, however, convey the artificiality of the 'data' and 'theory' separation. On the other hand, the need for rigour in terms of some kind of objective measuring has been fully acknowledged within the hermeneutic framework. That this is ambivalent has, I hope, been fully acknowledged in the earlier chapters in this section.

Fig 5.10: Research Plan

Based on layout in Orton 2000: 10



Section B

Actualisation

This section consists of 3 chapters, of differing length. Chapter 6 reports on the realisation, both practically and interpretatively, of the first hand investigation of footwear variability. This is a substantial chapter and contains a great deal of empirical detail. Chapter 7 introduces archaeological footwear material from secondary sources, which are used to amplify, extend and crosscheck the Chapter 6 findings. Chapter 8 examines the contribution of representational images. Although for the purposes of this account, effort will be made to separate these three areas of investigation, in reality they crosscut and cross-refer continuously and in the last major Section C, they will be reunited.

Chapter 6

The findings from primary sources

Introduction: the primary field

Over the last three years, around 100 days have been spent actually recording footwear in archives. Further substantial amounts of time have been spent in data processing and low-level reworking of the information recorded. What follows in this chapter, though, should not be seen as simple ‘description of results’. It has been made abundantly clear that the ‘facts’ being used here are themselves constructs, defined and elaborated at the planning stage, and are being treated in, to use Carr’s words, in a spirit of ‘constrained indeterminacy’ – as themselves theoretical propositions rather than empirical absolutes.

The chapter starts with an outline of the sample of footwear used in this research project, and the methods used to maximise reliability, given the exigencies of the field situation. Special consideration is given to decisions about dating the footwear and prioritising certain variables, and a check made on the foot size range for the various assemblages. The scene is then set for an examination of the range of variable values present in the sample as a whole: this is, in a sense, contextualising the variant forms to the Mid-Medieval period in Northern Europe, according to the primary sample. The descriptions of forms given in Part b are themselves, of course, selected from a host of possible examples: they are a selection made with a fair amount of hindsight. In Part c, change over time for the whole region is summarised, and an argument offered for two particularly striking change points. In Part d the relationship of foot size – and through this, maturity and sex of the wearer – will then be examined for the whole sample. Finally, in Part e the relationship between assemblages will be looked at very closely, in terms of both similarity and difference. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main insights.

Although many drawings, photographs, diagrams, graphs, tables and maps are used to illustrate points, these are themselves selected from a much larger archive of worked material. This is presented in statistical format in Appendices 6 and 7. This data is only comprehensible in conjunction with the handbook used to direct the recording, given as Appendix 2. As I have said earlier, the database should not be considered an 'objective' catalogue but instead a heuristic device to enable exploration of stylistic variability in a way that minimises the intuitive and impressionistic. The many unavoidable compromises will be acknowledged and recognised in the interpretations offered.

A diagram showing the main technical terms used in this chapter is given after the Table of Contents on page 13 as part of the introduction to this thesis. A more detailed glossary of footwear terminology is provided at the end, in Appendix 1

a) The Sample

i) Basic content

The total recorded sample for this project consists of 1,740 items drawn from 18 assemblages spread across North West Europe and dated reliably to the research period. The distribution of locations is shown in Figure 6.1. The assemblages were chosen to give as comprehensive and evenly spaced distribution as possible, but this choice had to be made within a framework of time, cost and (most important of all) accessibility constraints. Thus the Bergen assemblage rather than the Oslo assemblage was chosen for primary recording partly because of difficulties in communicating with the Oslo archive door-keepers and partly because of the availability of excellent publications of Oslo material (see chapter 7 on secondary sources).

Table 6.1: Assemblage Details

| Rank | Code | Place and site | Country | Sample size | Earliest date | Latest date | Sample type |
|------|------|-------------------------------|---------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | LON | London, 14 sites * | UK | 696 | AD900 | AD1200 | Large |
| 2 | DUI | Duisburg, Aldt Markt* | Germany | 177 | AD1050 | AD1200 | |
| 2 | YRK | York, Coppergate | UK | 177 | AD850 | AD1050 | |
| 4 | DBN | Dublin, Fishamble St, High St | Eire | 121 | AD850 | AD1200 | |
| 5 | HDY | Hedeby, near Schleswig | Germany | 87 | AD800 | AD1050 | Medium |
| 6 | SCH | Schleswig | Germany | 66 | AD1050 | AD1200 | |
| 7 | DUR | Durham* | UK | 60 | AD950 | AD1200 | |
| 8 | ROU | Rouen* | France | 52 | AD800 | AD1200 | |
| 8 | WIN | Winchester* | UK | 52 | AD850 | AD1200 | |
| 10 | BGD | Borgund, Sunmore | Norway | 46 | AD1050 | AD1200 | |
| 11 | EHF | Elisenhof | Germany | 43 | AD800 | AD900 | |
| 12 | BRU | Brugge* (Bruges) | Belgium | 41 | AD900 | AD1000 | |
| 13 | BER | Bergen | Norway | 30 | AD1050 | AD1200 | Small |
| 14 | LYN | King's Lynn* | UK | 27 | AD1100 | AD1200 | |
| 15 | IRB | Irish Bog Shoes* | Eire | 25 | AD700 | AD1200 | |
| 16 | NOR | Norwich* | UK | 17 | AD1000 | AD1200 | |

| Rank | Code | Place and site | Country | Sample size | Earliest date | Latest date | Sample type |
|------|------|----------------|---------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| 17 | OXF | Oxford* | UK | 14 | AD750 | AD850 | Small |
| 18 | GLO | Gloucester* | UK | 9 | AD850 | AD950 | |
| | | | Total | 1740 | | | |

Notes:

1. * indicates assemblages where every item was recorded
2. Dates are approximate, to nearest 50 years, and based entirely on given datings.
3. Dates relate only to the research period: many assemblages contain large quantities of post-1200 footwear.
4. Sample defined as set out in text.

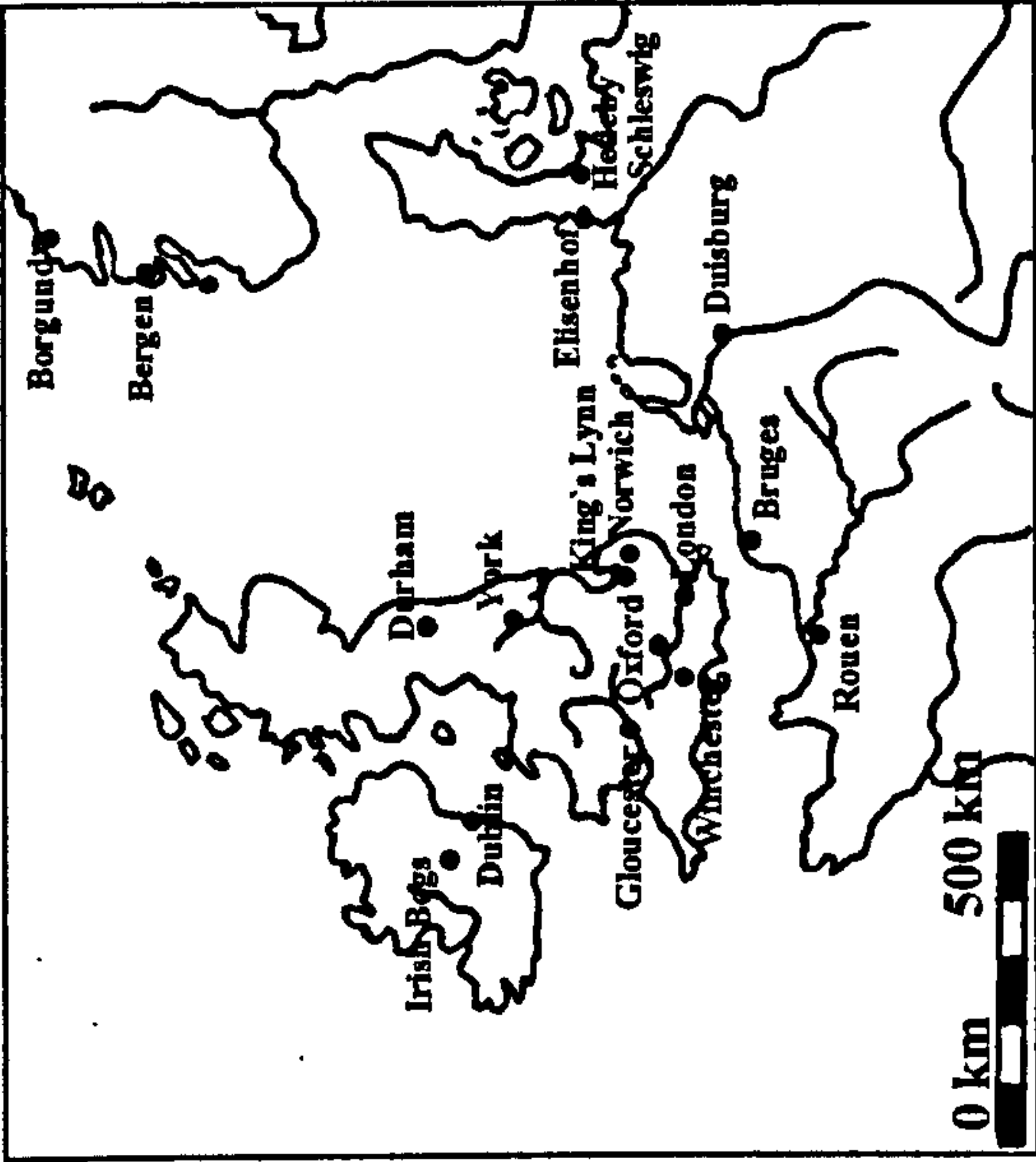


Figure 6.1 Locations of primary assemblage origins

The basic provenance of these items is not in question, as finds locations are reliably known for all, even the so-called Irish Bog shoes (IRBs). In all cases except for the IRBs, detailed accounts of excavational contexts are available. In 1704 cases, dates are offered which are independent of footwear typology and give a dating within the time span, although the degree of precision varies considerably. Of the 36 items not assignable to a time phase, 9 come from unstratified contexts in London and 2 from York: they have been left in the overall sample because they are known to come from the broad period AD 900-1100. The other 25 are the IRBs.

Earlier, it was stated that items dated solely on footwear typological grounds would not be included. The inclusion of the IRBs, therefore, needs justification. This small assemblage, archived at the National Museum in Dublin, consists of complete footwear found in the late 19th and early 20th century by peat diggers and donated to local archaeologists: presumably more fragmentary preserved items were cast aside. The assemblage includes five highly unusual decorated shoes, which have been provisionally dated to 8th-9th century on the basis of decorative motifs rather than the footwear itself. (Lucas 1956: 380). Other items offer similarly distinctive features. Thus this collection was worth recording at first hand. It has not however been used in the phase analyses which feature later in this chapter, and will be brought in at a later stage. It is worth pointing out that a securely dated assemblage from 10th - 12th century Dublin forms part of the main sample.

Table 6.1 sets out the sizes of the assemblages. The huge size of the London assemblage has already been mentioned, and has to be taken into account when making comparisons. In a number of other cases, asterisked in the table, all available and relevant footwear was recorded. Elsewhere, however, sampling decisions were taken. With Hedeby, the sampling was 1 in 5: with Elisenhof, Schleswig, Borgund and Dublin, 1 in 2. These samples were taken by simple count/reject: in no case was an item rejected because it offered 'nothing new' or selected because it 'looked interesting'. Thus incidences revealed by these samples are valid. The main problems arose with York and Bergen. In the former case, access to the archive itself was, for the best of courteous reasons, not

possible and selection was made from the very comprehensive catalogue. This selection was based on a) degree of completeness and b) date given, ensuring as balanced and wide a coverage as possible, i.e the stylistic variability itself was ignored. In the case of Bergen, the group of items offered by the archivist had already been sorted to display the remarkable decorative features for which this footwear is well known, and is therefore heavily biased. In this case, reliance must be placed on Larsen's 1992 publication on the footwear of Gullskoen for charting realistic limits of variability in this assemblage (see Chapter 7).

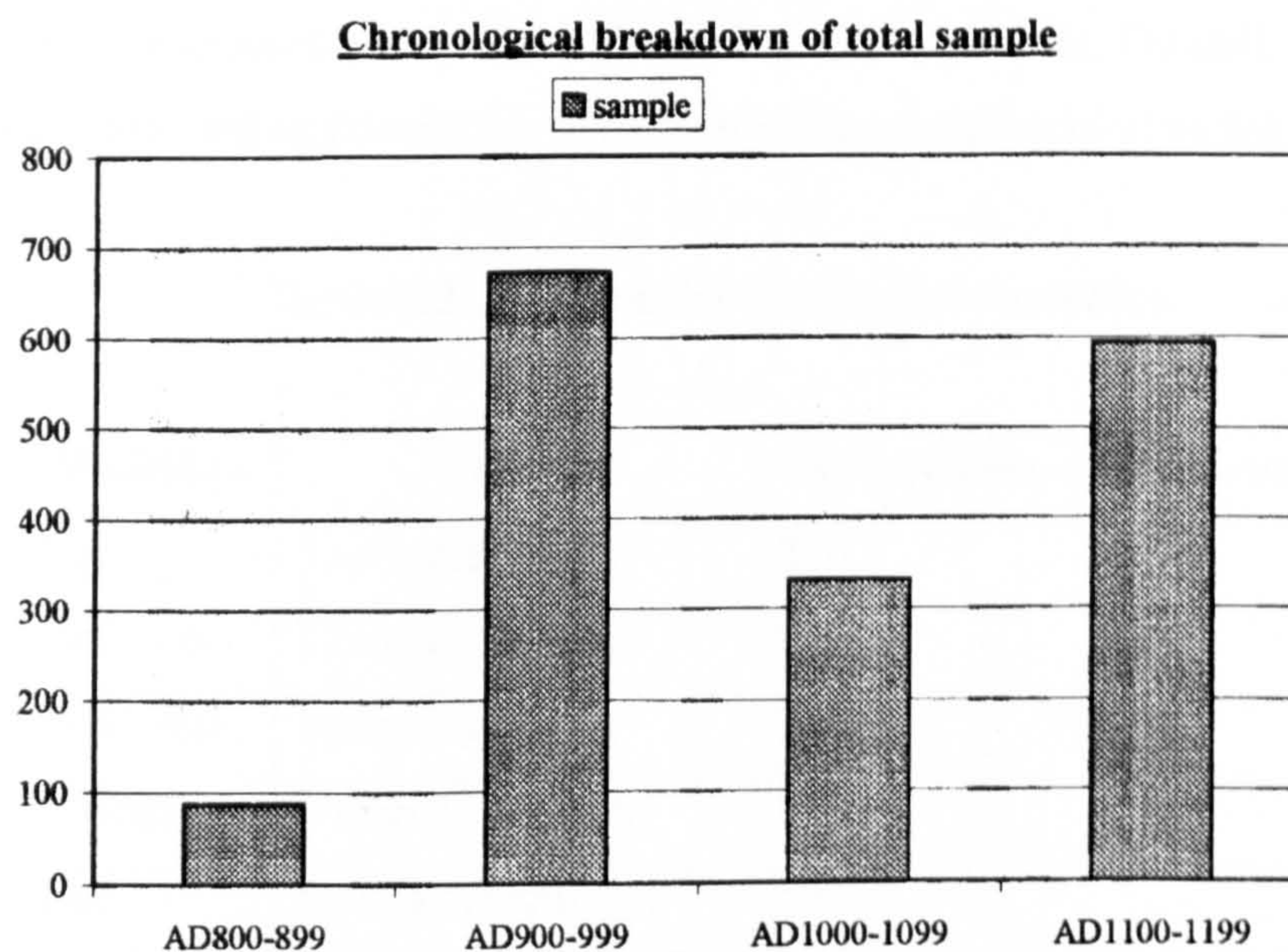
ii) *Dating of items in the sample*

It must be made clear at this stage that the term 'phase' is being used in an entirely expedient sense. It is **not** meant to indicate any kind of homogenous chronological period separated from the ones preceding or following it by significant material differences. The 50-year span of each phase has already been justified (Chapter 5), and the anchorage in terms of *00 and *50 is simply to fit with the terminology of site reports. Even with this, many compromises have had to be made (see Chapter 5 and below) and these must be kept constantly in mind when interpreting. Table 6.1 gives the date ranges covered.

Figure 6.2 gives the distribution of the combined assemblage by time phase, using the midphase dating strategy outlined in chapter 5. The numbering system used is set out in Table 5.2. The 10th and 12th centuries are particularly well represented. The relative shortage of 9th century sites is partly accounted for by the forced assignation of all Hedeby footwear to phase 1 (900-949), whereas it must be acknowledged that a proportion of this footwear is almost certainly earlier, falling into phases 11 and 12 (800-899), or later, falling into phase 2 (950-999). The only assurance I have for the Hedeby dates is that the footwear is not 11th century (Ulbricht pers comm.). There are, however, other possible reasons for the 9th century shortage. Many of the settlements of the 6th -9th centuries in Northern Europe were on dry gravelly sites e.g. Lundenwic (Cowie & Blackmore 1999: 314-5), Quentovic (Hill 1990: 51-58), Koln (Clarke & Simms 1985: 30-31), where taphonomic conditions have not permitted the survival of leather.

Furthermore, the 9th century material from St Denis has not been available. In the next chapter, however, supplementation of the 9th century material will be made using information from Doorstede, Middelburg and the Oseberg burial site within the research domain.

Figure 6.2 Chronological breakdown of total primary sample



The relative shortage of 11th century footwear is more puzzling. On evidence from close examination of dating criteria used in 1970s excavations, I suspect that, in the absence of more accurate dating information, there is a semi-conscious tendency to assign footwear either to early urban, i.e 10th century, or to assign it to the post 12th 'true Medieval' period. This is especially true in the UK where the 11th century, evasively labelled as 'Saxo-Norman' (as in Vince 1991) or 'Anglo-Scandinavian' (as in Tweddle 1986) is something of a black hole archaeologically.

iii) *Sampling of variables*

The basis for identifying a fragment as an ‘item’ has already been explained (Chapter 5). Each item was counted as representative of a single item of footwear and assigned a key number. In some cases, comparison of stitching spacing and other details enabled the pooling of several fragments as belonging together. In other cases, fragments previously packaged together as coming from one shoe were plainly not associated in this way. Except in the case of the 62 complete shoes, individual items did not have total information potential and the database had been constructed to cope with this, using separate tables. Overall, the variables selected as priority for investigation were represented as follows:

Table 6.2 Samples of selected variables

| Visibility | Variable | Recordable, dated items |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| High visibility | Toe morphology | 880 |
| | Coverage of body | 754 |
| Moderate visibility | Fastening forms | 751 |
| | Vamp decoration | 812 |
| Low visibility | Heel morphology | 884 |
| | Structural cut | 1268 |
| Other | Sole morphology | 314 (complete soles) |

The framework of visibility differences has already been fully discussed in Chapters 4 and Chapter 5, and is based on Carr’s model.

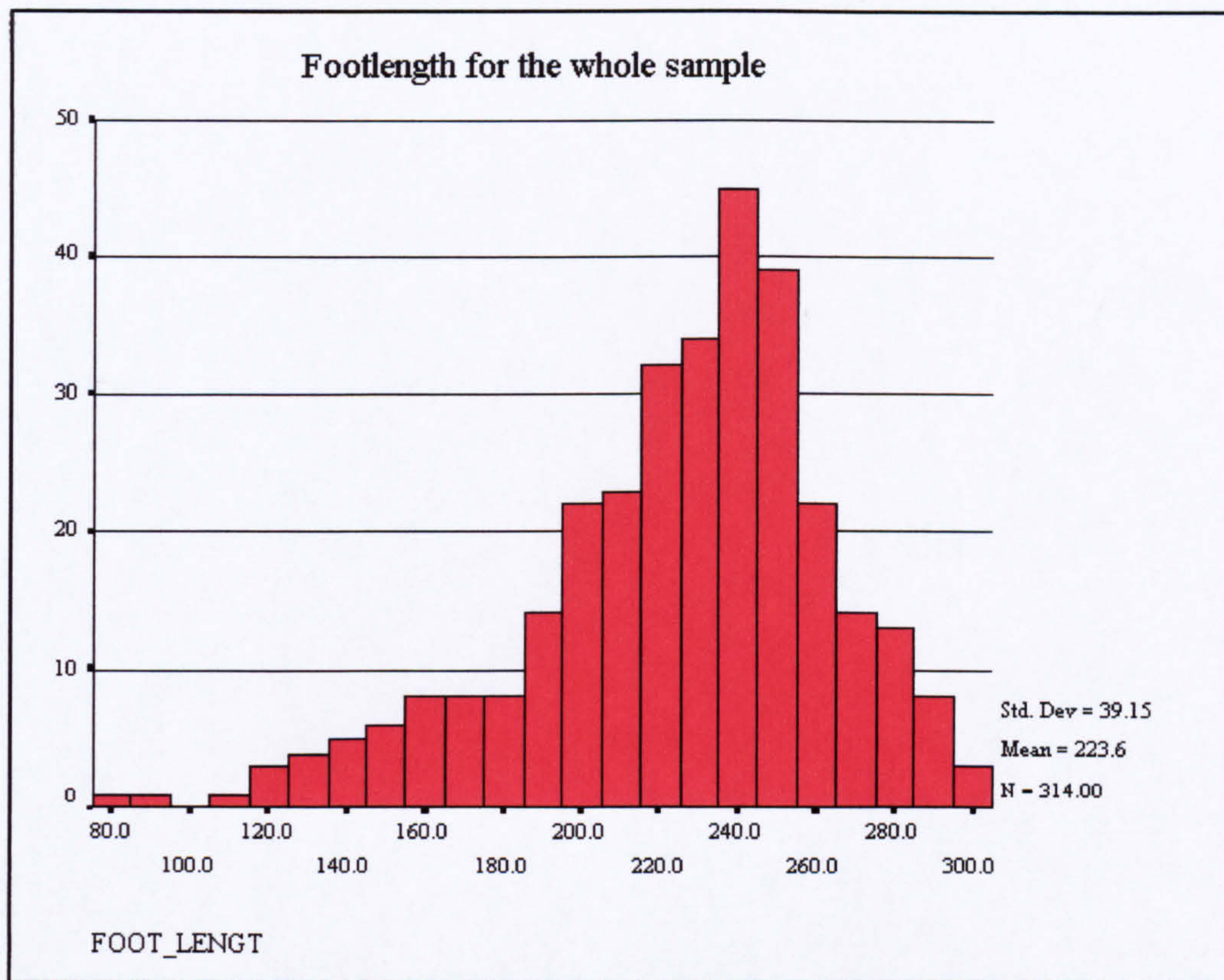
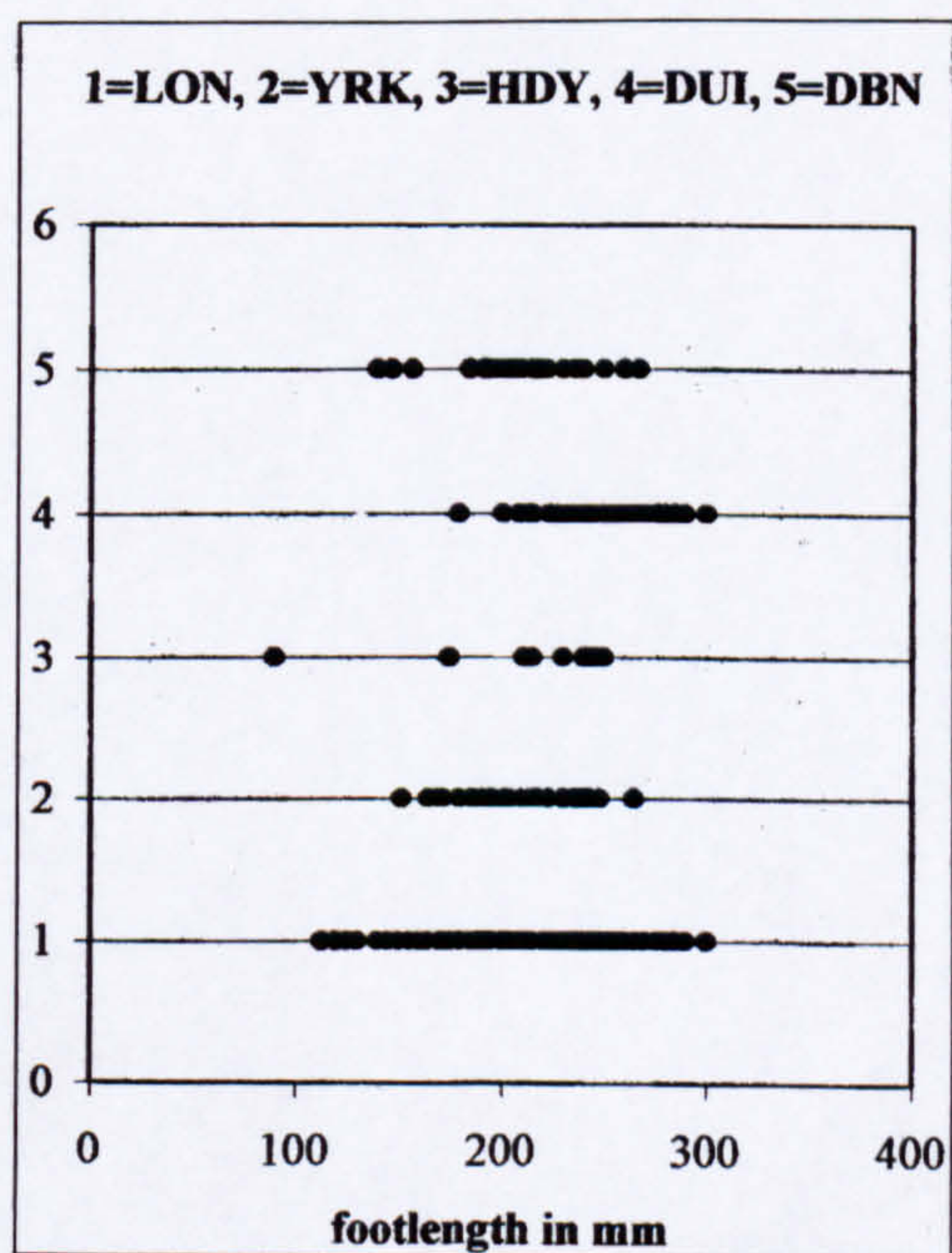
Information was also gathered on other forms of decoration and finish, on the presence and patterning of wear and repair, on materials used for stitching and on the presence or absence of cut edges (suggesting dismemberment for recycling of leather). This additional information is useful for interpretative reasoning and contextualisation.

iv) Size variability in the sample.

The single most useful variable in footwear is its variation in length according to the size of the foot of the wearer. This is not a straightforward relationship, as stylistic variables can distort the relationship considerably, but if these are taken into account reasonably reliable relative estimates of foot length can be obtained (See Chapter 5). Soles offer the best basis for estimates, as they often have useful wear markings but sufficiently complete uppers can also offer help. At this stage, the whole sample needs to be reviewed to get an idea of the range of foot lengths overall and their general distribution over space and time.

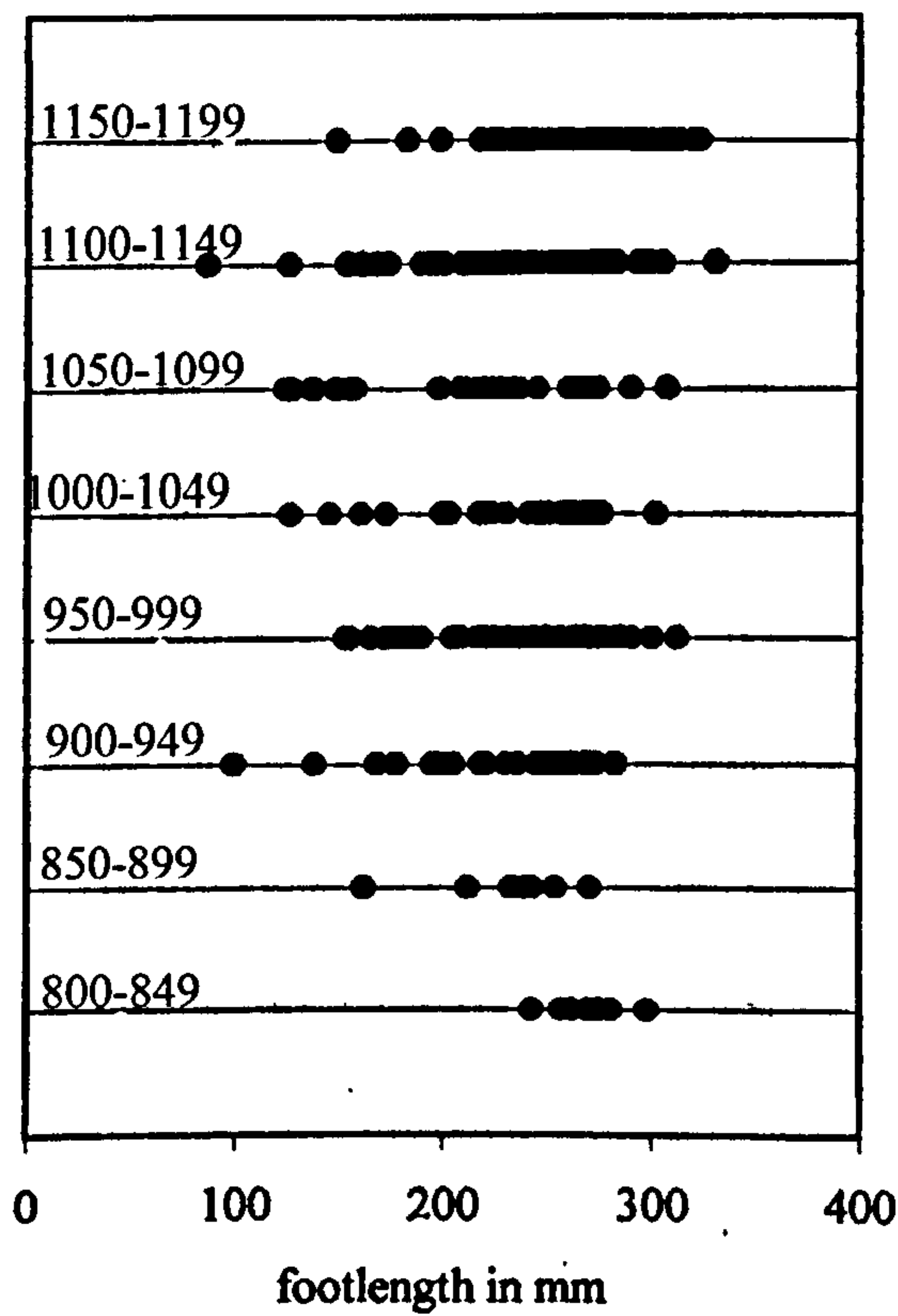
314 soles were complete enough for reliable foot length estimates. Figure 6.3 shows a histogram of sizes for the whole sample, which follows very much the pattern expected for a multi-age, mixed sex population. There are, however, significant regional contrasts. Fig 6.4 shows the distribution of foot lengths based on soles for the 5 larger samples. All 5 locations show a range of sizes from small child to large adult, though, interestingly, Duisburg is represented by only one of the smaller sizes and no infant's shoes. In the cases of Dublin and York, however, sizes cluster around the 190-230mm sizes and with London and Duisburg, the clustering is around 210 to 260mm, even 270 for Duisburg. Upper sizes, corrected for toe length, mostly confirm these patterns, although a few larger sizes are indicated for York.

It is, of course, possible that these contrasts arise from taphonomic and/or conservation differences leading to different degrees of shrinkage or bloating. As far as taphonomy is concerned, the survival of all of this footwear was dependent on similar anaerobic, waterlogged conditions and as far as I know there is no way of making subtle distinctions, so for the purposes of this project this is discounted. From the conservation angle, the methods used for London, York, Rouen and Duisburg are similar, but the lack of conservation of the Dublin footwear, leading to excessive drying out, may account to some extent for the smallness of the Dublin footwear.

Figure 6.3 Foot length for whole primary sample**Figure 6.4** Foot length by main locations

A further insight is given by examining footwear size over time in Figure 6.5.

Fig 6.5 Foot length over time



Although there are some striking large outliers in the early 10th century, there does seem to be a general trend over time towards larger foot size. Certainly when London foot length is compared with York and Dublin for the relevant period (AD850-1050) the contrast, although still present, is not nearly so marked, and can be accounted for in terms of a few unusually big (male?) outliers. The lack of smaller sizes at Duisburg may also suggest that this particular assemblage represents mainly male footwear, a suggestion contextually plausible in that the footwear comes from a workshop site in a busy riverside market, rather than from occupational domestic sites. The large Duisburg sample biases the 12th century foot lengths towards larger sizes.

With the smaller samples, the distributions do not offer such marked contrasts, except that Elisenhof (on both upper and sole evidence) has no children's shoes, although there is a range of adult sizes. This is surprising as Elisenhof is interpreted as a small agricultural, presumably familial, settlement: possibly the children of Elisenhof went barefoot? It is noticeable, however, that in these medium samples, both King's Lynn and Durham lean towards the larger sizes. Again, these site assemblages date from the latter end of the research period.

This is not the place to investigate this apparent increase in foot size (and, presumably stature) over the research period, which would need linking with osteological evidence. A methodological issue, however, does arise. This concerns the validity of using, for the research period, universal foot length categories in looking for possible sex and age links to stylistic variability. In other words, is the category statistically defined as 'small adult' (and probably female) as valid for the 12th century as it is for the 10th century? Given the lack of other supporting evidence, a common categorisation will continue to be used for the whole sample for analysis, but the implications of the above will be kept in mind when considering the interpretation of, in particular, 12th century patterns.

b) The parameters of style in the research domain.

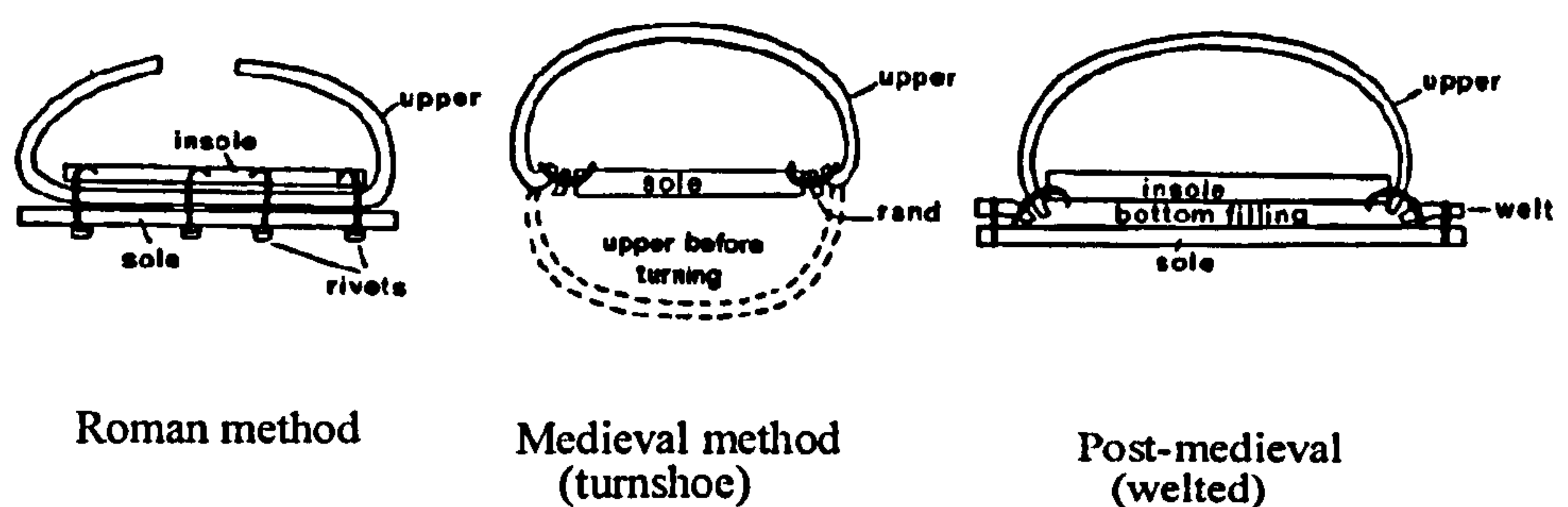
It is useful and important to set out at this stage the limits of the variation shown in this sample. This is not an attempt to identify 'norms' or 'types' or a 'cultural domain' but to indicate the field of variability within the defined spatio-temporal research domain, and to introduce the main forms.

Firstly, all of the footwear in the primary sample is made of leather and held together by stitching. There is no evidence of the use of nails (as in shoes from the Roman period see van Driel-Murray 1987, 2001) or wooden pegs (as in the later Medieval period, see Groenman van-Waateringe 1988a: 25). Although ascertaining the type of leather (e.g. sheep, cow, calf, goat, deer) was not part of this project, it does seem that the type used varied from place to place and over time. This will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter using secondary sources. Records were kept, however, of material used to stitch seams and this

showed clear variation, involving alternatives of thin leather thonging, twisted thread (wool or bast) or gut. There was also variation in the materials used for decorative stitching, which survived in a number of cases; wool, linen and silk were alternatives used. The silk sometimes retained evidence of dyed colour. There was no evidence in the primary sample for the use of metallic thread for decoration.

The structure of the footwear shows considerable variation across the research domain. Basic cut varies from a single shaped piece, folded, wrapped and stitched to make a 3-dimensional shoe, to a complex of up to 4 major cut pieces stitched together to give the shape, sometimes with additional small inserted pieces and add-ons. There are no cases, however of the sole externally attached to a one-piece wrap around (Roman style) or a welted sole (as universal from the 16th century on in Northern Europe). This absence is important not simply for seriation but because it means that this footwear could not in itself be used to enhance the height of the wearer though thick soles or raised heels. (see Fig 6.6)

Figure 6.6 Major differences in shoe construction

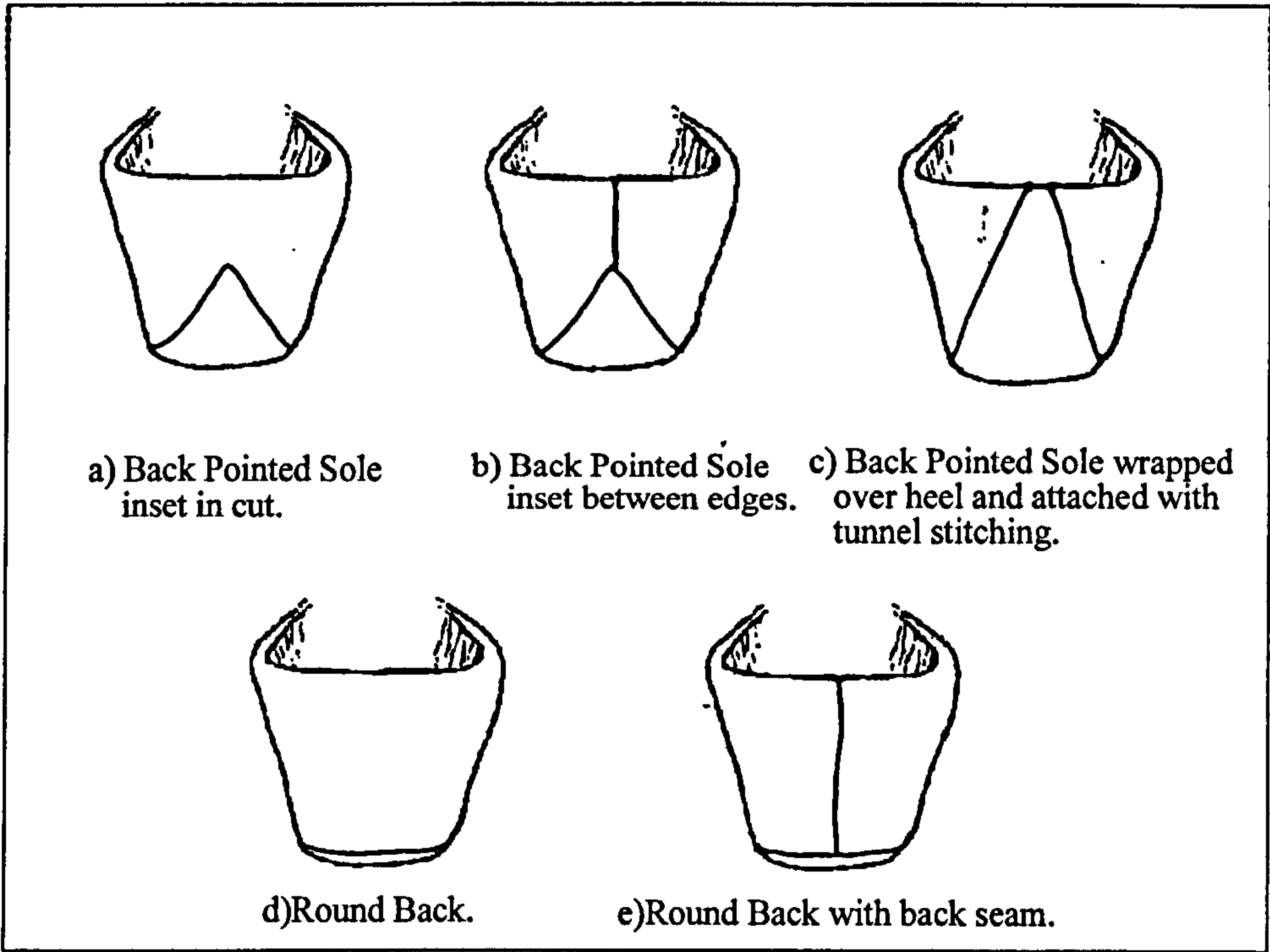


Adapted from Swann 1986:2

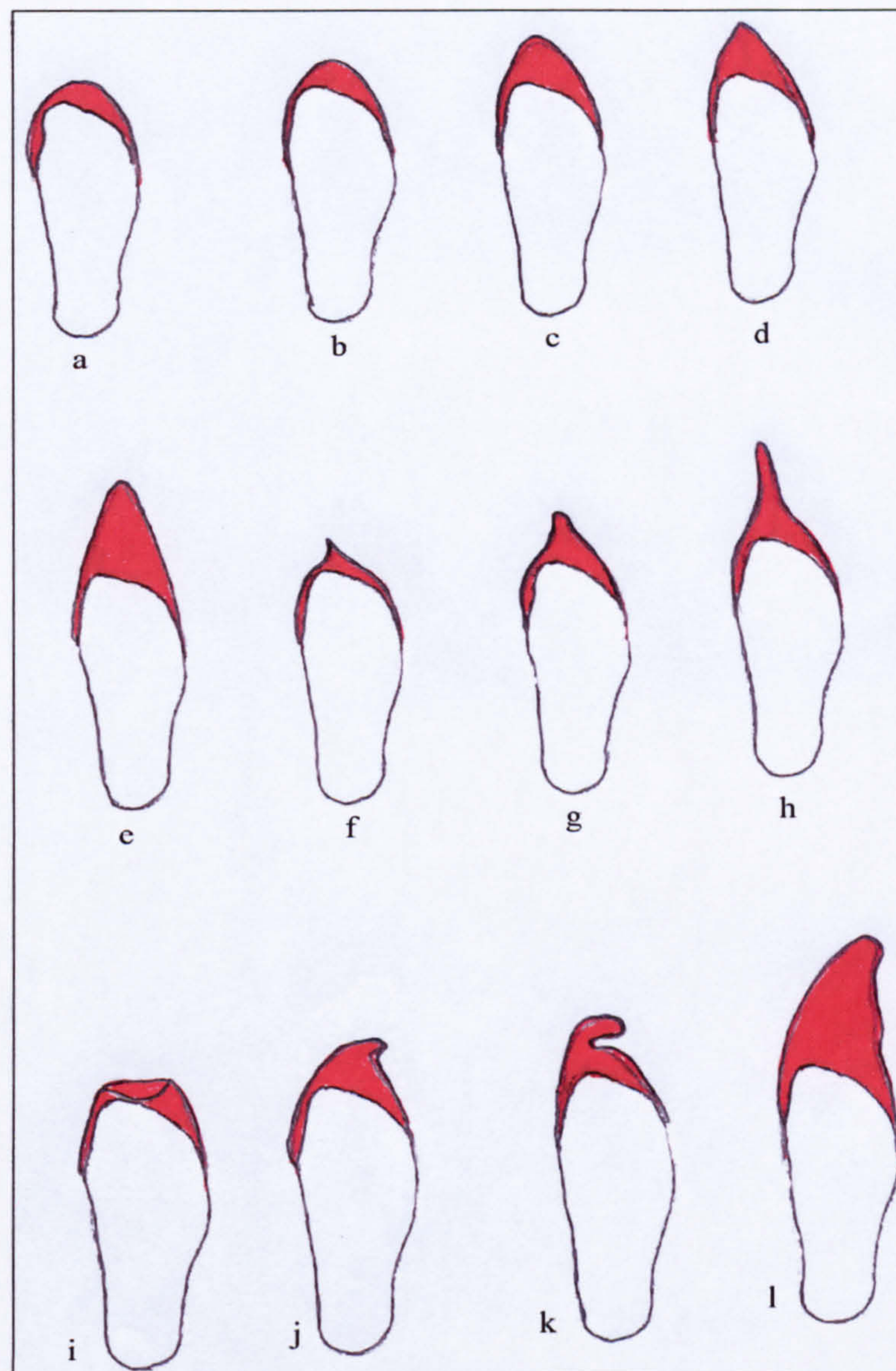
A last area of structural variation involves the makeup of the heel area. Although at all times and all places the 'normal' (in modern terms) round backed heel is found, there is a common and widespread variant where the sole is extended

upwards in a point (the Back Point) which is wrapped upwards around the heel to form an integral part of the upper. Fig 6.7 illustrates this important variability. The overall shape of the footwear also shows considerable variation. Although most of the footwear of the research period is laterally symmetrical, the toe area shows much variation in pointedness. Much of this can be seen in terms of a graded differentiation but there are many examples from different times and places within the research domain of strikingly different toe forms. (Figure 6.8)

Figure 6.7: Heel forms



Sole shape is less variable, at least until the late 11th early 12th century when diversity is much greater: this will be dealt with more fully later in this chapter.

Figure 6.8: Toe forms

a-e correspond to Toe Types 1-5, symmetrical and graded from rounded to pointed.

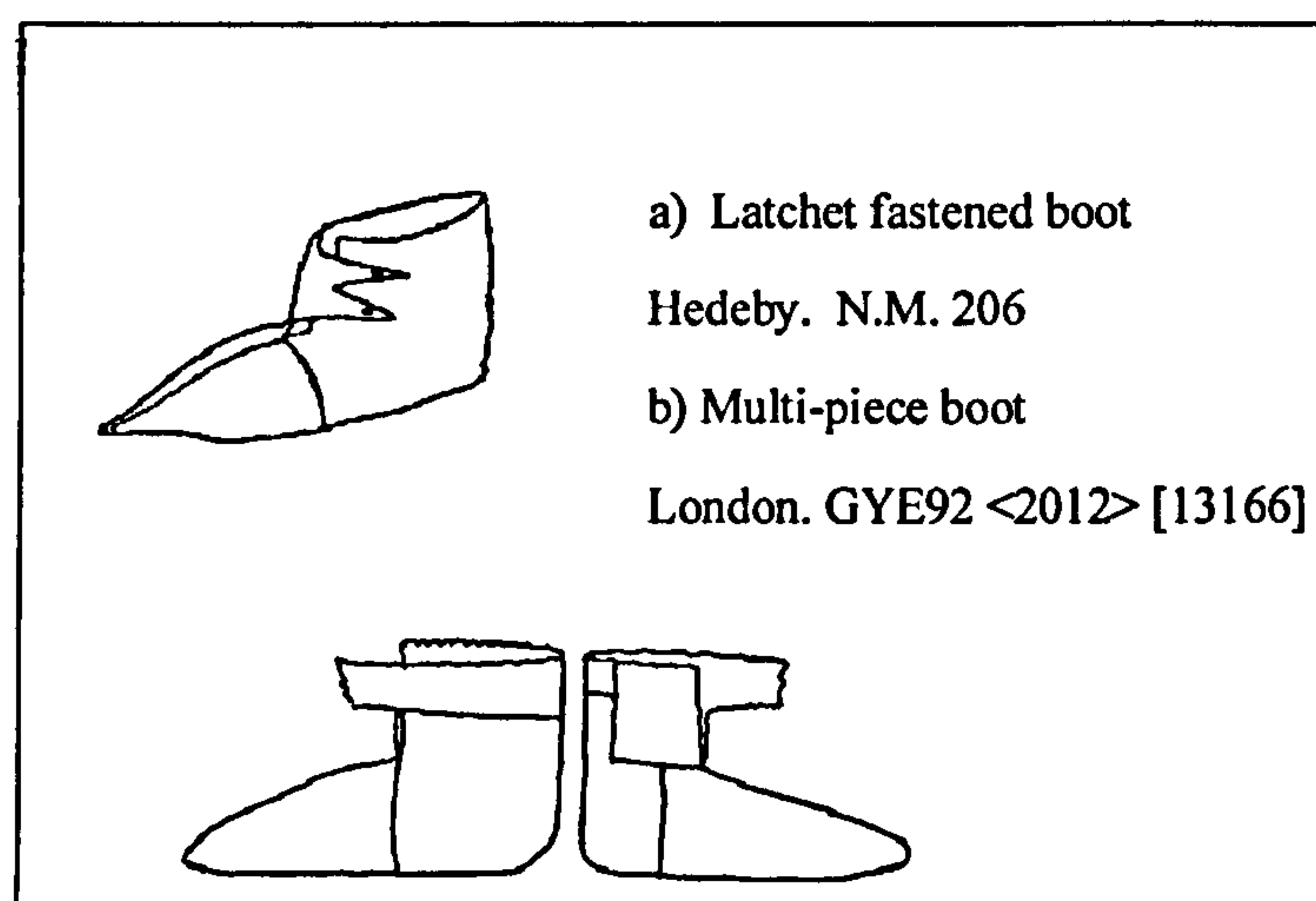
f-h correspond to Toe Types 9, 10 and 6.

i corresponds to the wedge toe Type 8.

l corresponds to Toe Type 7, with **j** and **k** representing a wide range of hooked variants.

Coverage of the lower body also varies between the very low cut (exposing the foot to the base of the toes) and a mid-calf low boot. (Figure 6.9) Boots higher than this are not found in this sample, however, and neither is there any archaeological evidence of the thonged sandal so beloved of monastic illustrators of the time. It is possible that some of the separate soles found were formerly attached to hose rather than leather uppers, and that some of the low cut shoes had textile attached uppers, but impossible to be sure. There is marked variation in the longitudinal profiles of these shoes, in that some slope up to the back, some slope down from the back, some are even.

Figure 6.9 Examples of Low Boots.

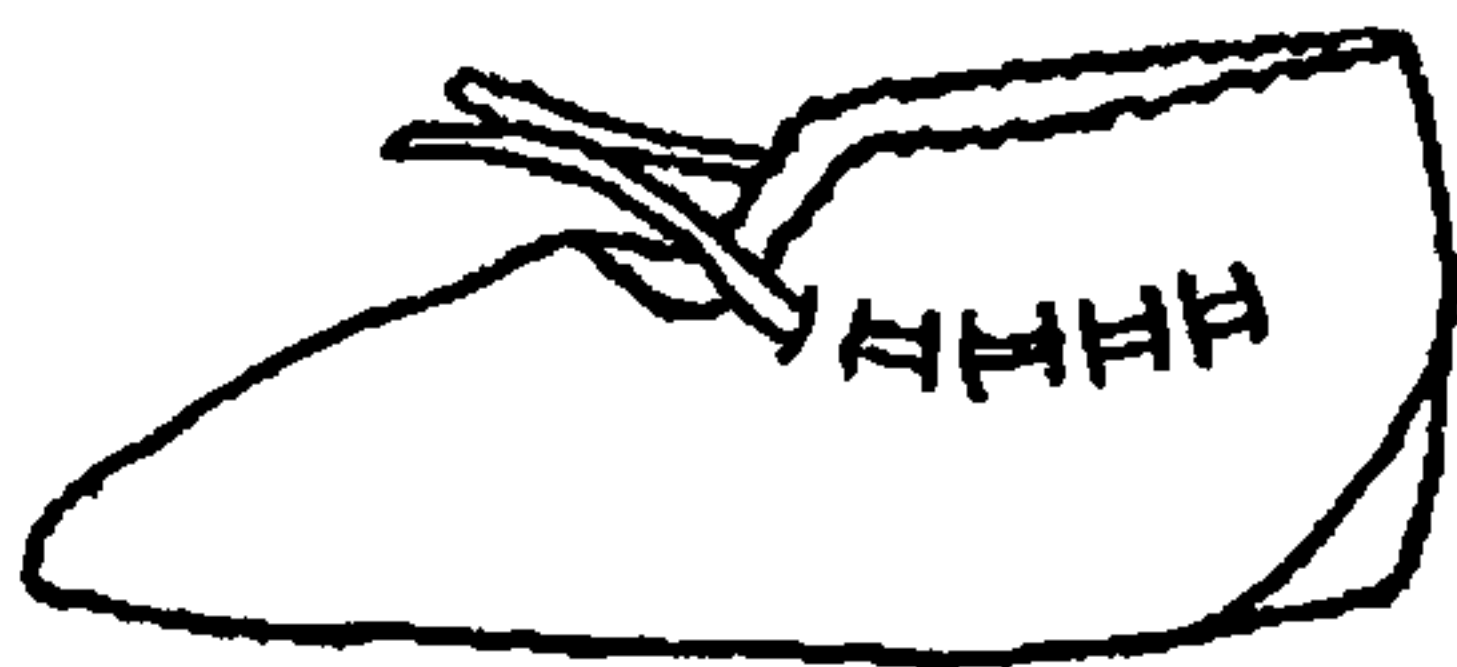


A major area of variation – and the one most often used by footwear specialists for this period to construct typologies, see Chapter 2 - relates to methods of keeping the shoe on the foot, usually referred to as fastening methods. Many items, of varying coverage, have no visible fastening method or wear traces showing the use of wrap around thongs to hold the shoe on. There are, however, many contrived fastening variations which are quite striking – variations using a threaded drawstring, involving many or few slits, located in a variety of places; latches with drawstrings or laces or a tag and toggle arrangement, multiple or single; side vents with laces. There is no evidence in this sample, however, of the use of buckles or buttons (13th century onwards) or the kind of lace-ups common with Roman footwear. The variation in fastening designs is so great that judging

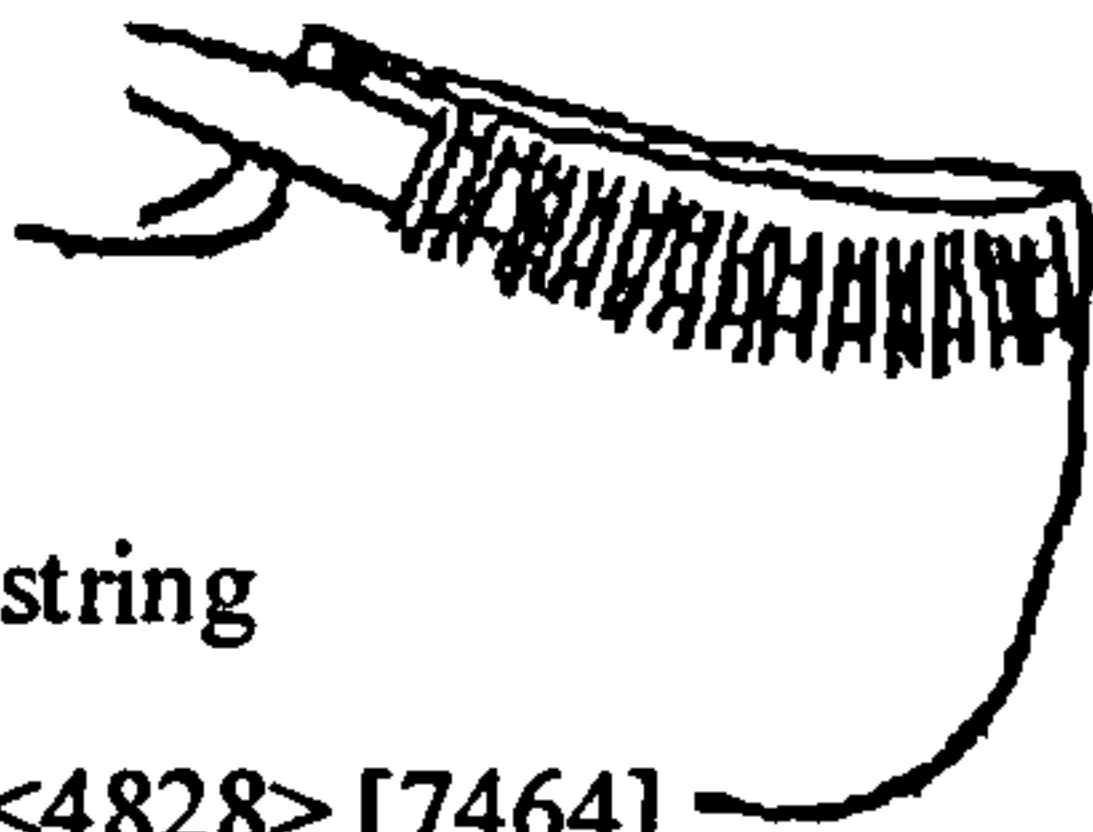
them on functional terms seems quite inadequate and that many variants need to be seen as significant differentiators. The main variants are shown in Figure 6.10 but cannot really convey the enormous number of variants within and beyond these broad areas. Goubitz in his recent book (Goubitz 2001) sets out fastening type categories numbered from 10 to 150, with mechanisms for subdividing and adding more on the end.

Finally, there is variation in what can be seen as straightforward decorative aspects. The footwear varies from the plain and undecorated in this sense, to the elaborately embroidered, impressed or incised. There are also some examples of openwork (punched holes). Most decoration is on the vamp, but there are examples of decoration in another areas such as around the foot opening or on the Back Point. Some shoes have simple cut edges, others show evidence of over stitching and still others have evidence of the former attachment of a decorative band (topband) around the foot opening. Although in no case was a topband found in situ, many were clearly associated with particular shoe fragments. Many topbands are decorated with embroidery or engraving. Most decoration is geometric in design: naturalistic motifs such as foliage are rare and highly specific in time and place. The main variants are shown in Figure 6.11

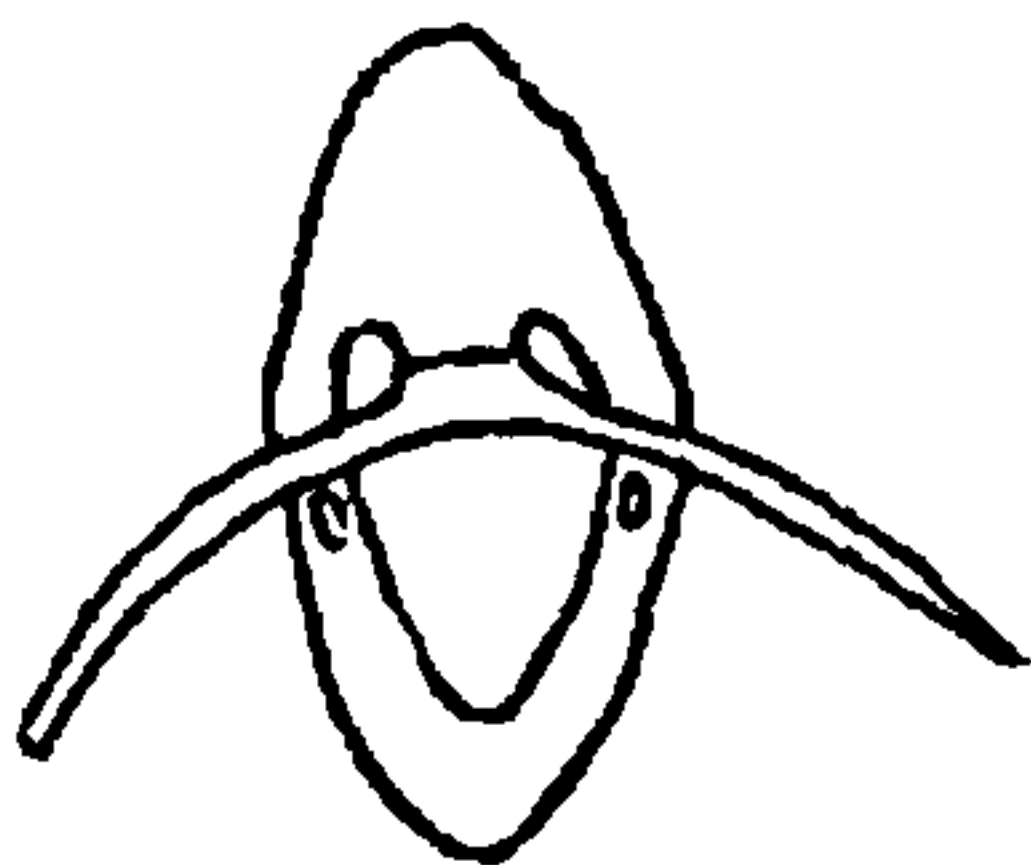
The dangers of dealing with artefact variation on a feature-by-feature basis are well known. (Baxter 1994: 15-20, Doran & Hodson 1975: 99-103) At this stage, therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the degree to which certain values cluster together. In particular, are there certain combinations, which are absolutely consistent, i.e. represent what can be seen as a specific 'type' in the emic sense? Before this is reviewed, however, it must be made clear that this kind of 'type' is not the classificatory etic type, whereby all items are assigned an exclusive category. Rather it is a search for areas of conformity in a general situation of diversity.



a) Simple drawstring.
Dublin E172:FS11 [11399]



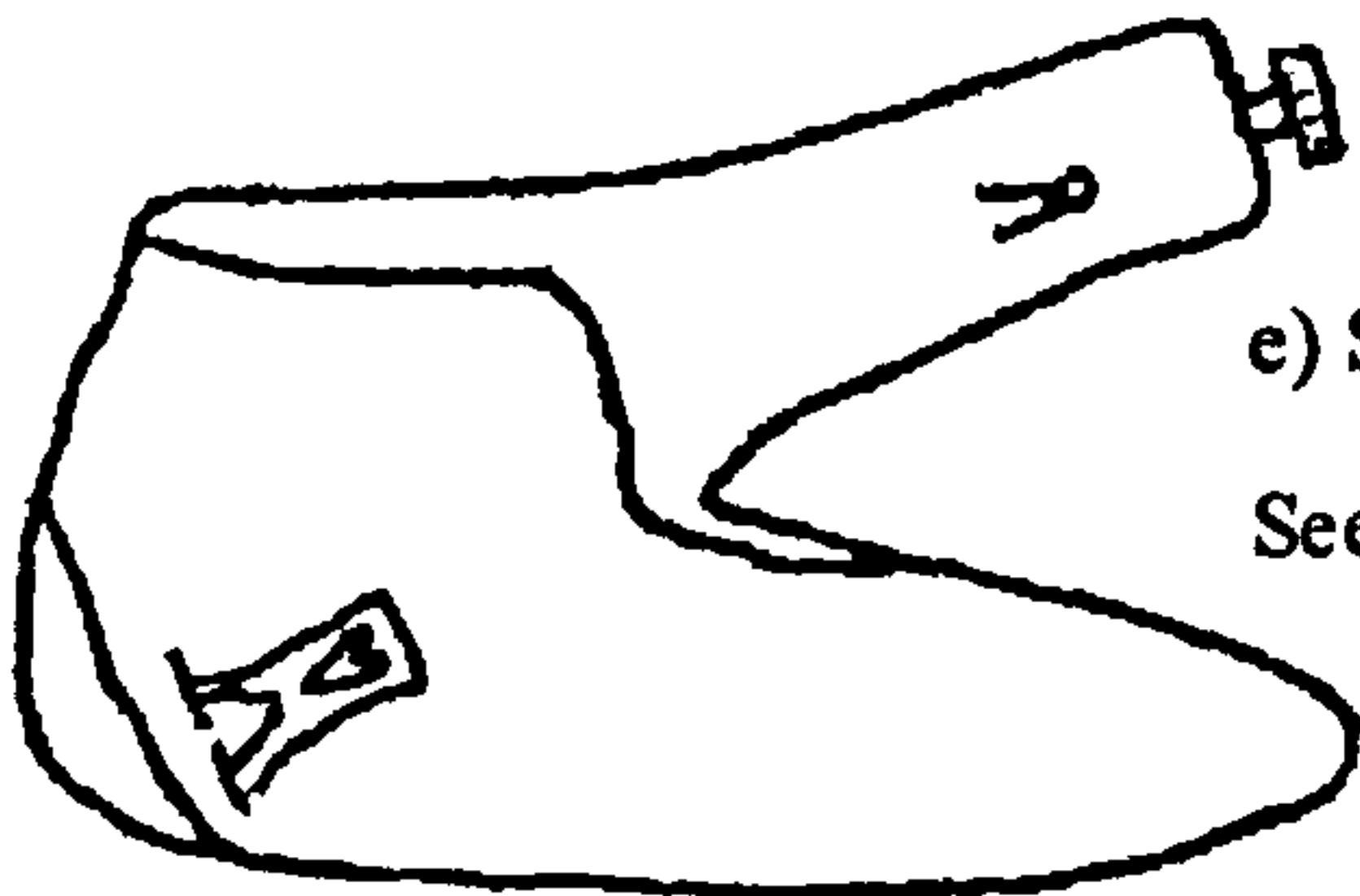
b) Multislit drawstring
London. BIG82 <4828> [7464]



c) Attached Drawstring
London. UPT90 <326> [962]

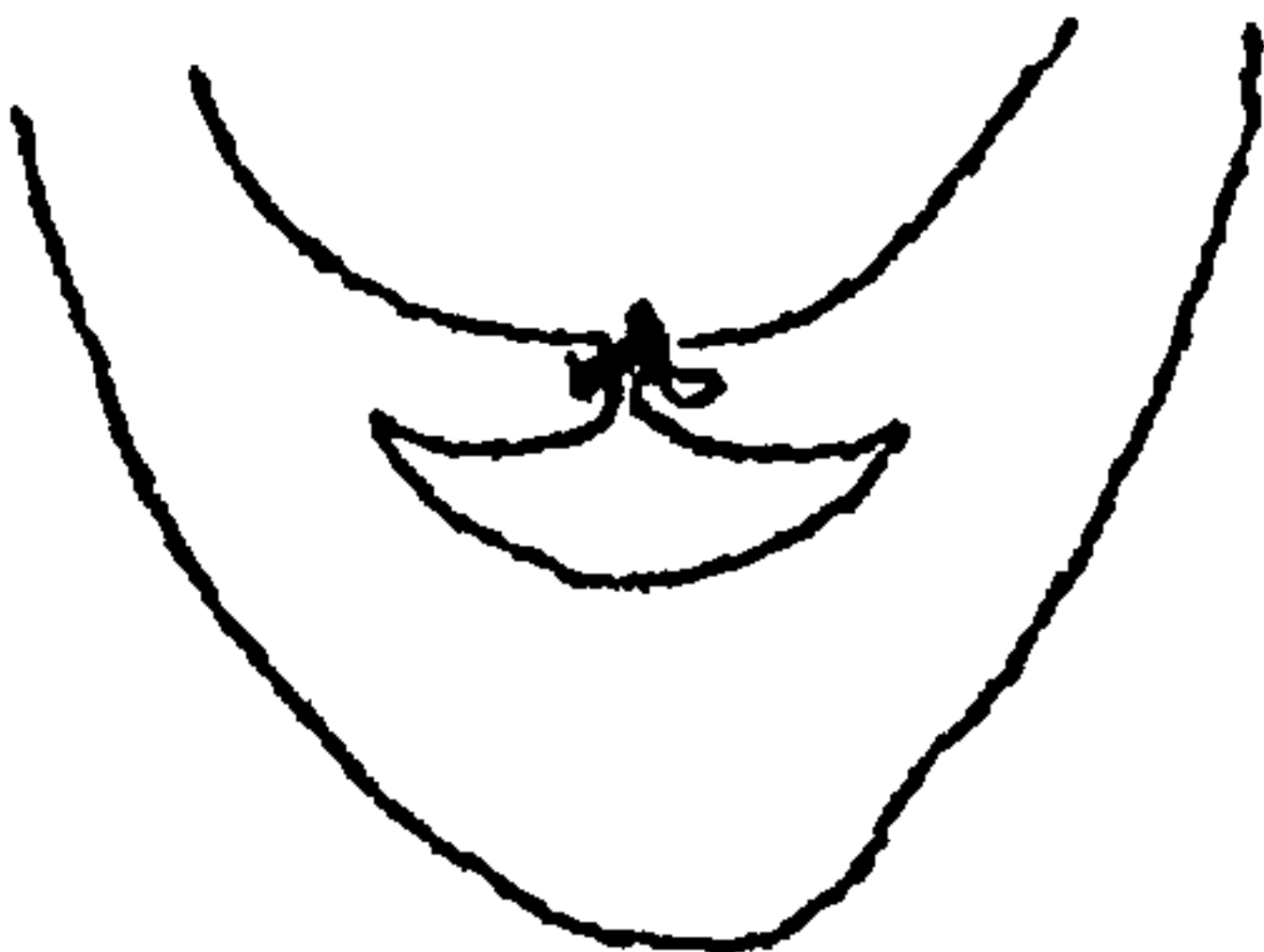


d) Vertical drawstring
Duisburg. AM F2.9



e) Single Latchet.
See Fig 6.14 for photographs

f) Strap and toggle
Bergen. <54687>



g) Side lacing
Dublin. E172 FS11 [14857]

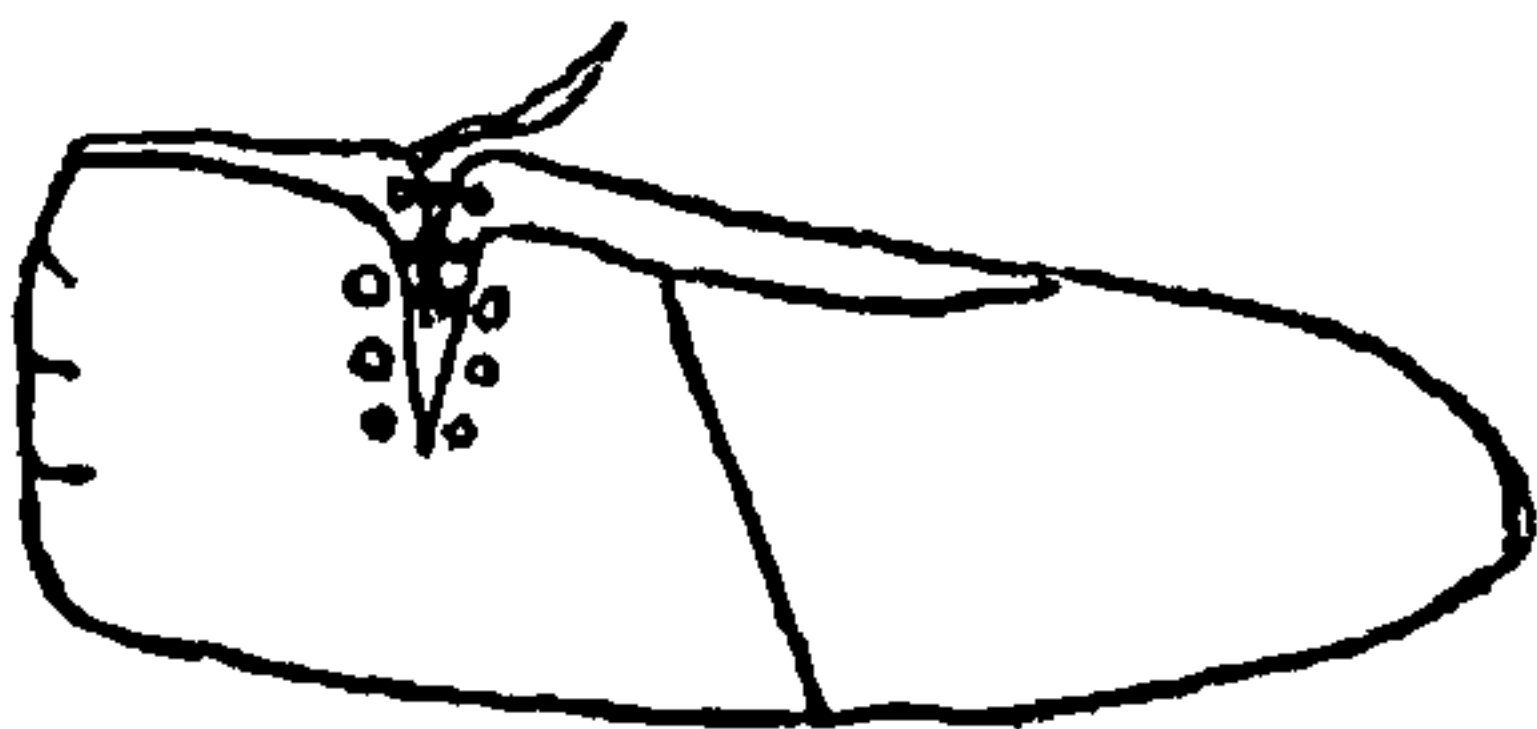


Figure 6. 10: Fastening Strategies

Decorative variants

1. Back Point and vamp: 10th century
2. More Back Point variants: 10th century
3. Decorative Drawstrings: early 12th century
4. Embroidered vamp pattern: 8th-9th century
5. Embroidered vamp pattern: 12th century
6. Decorative cut edge: 10th century
7. Topband: 11th century

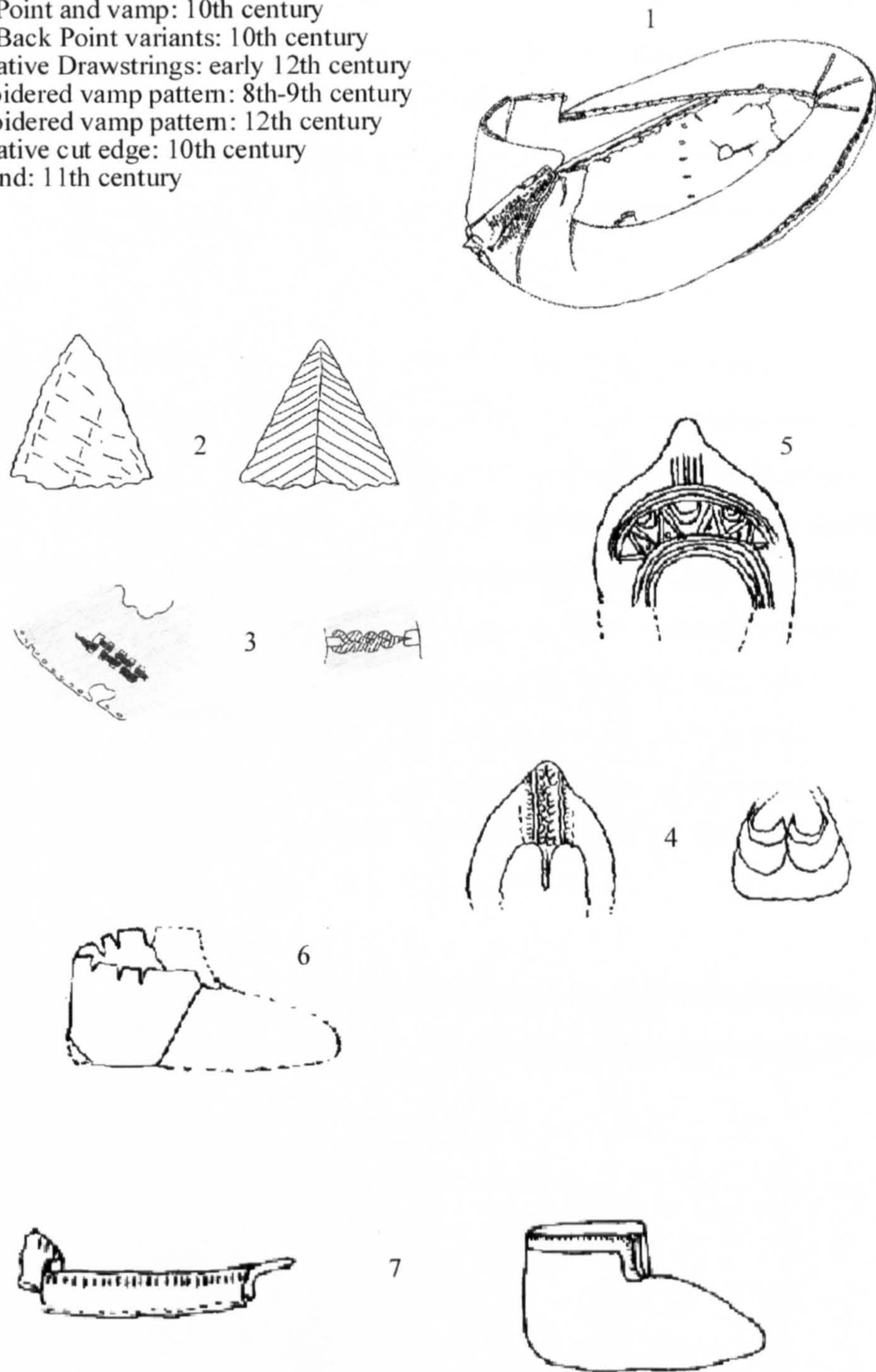
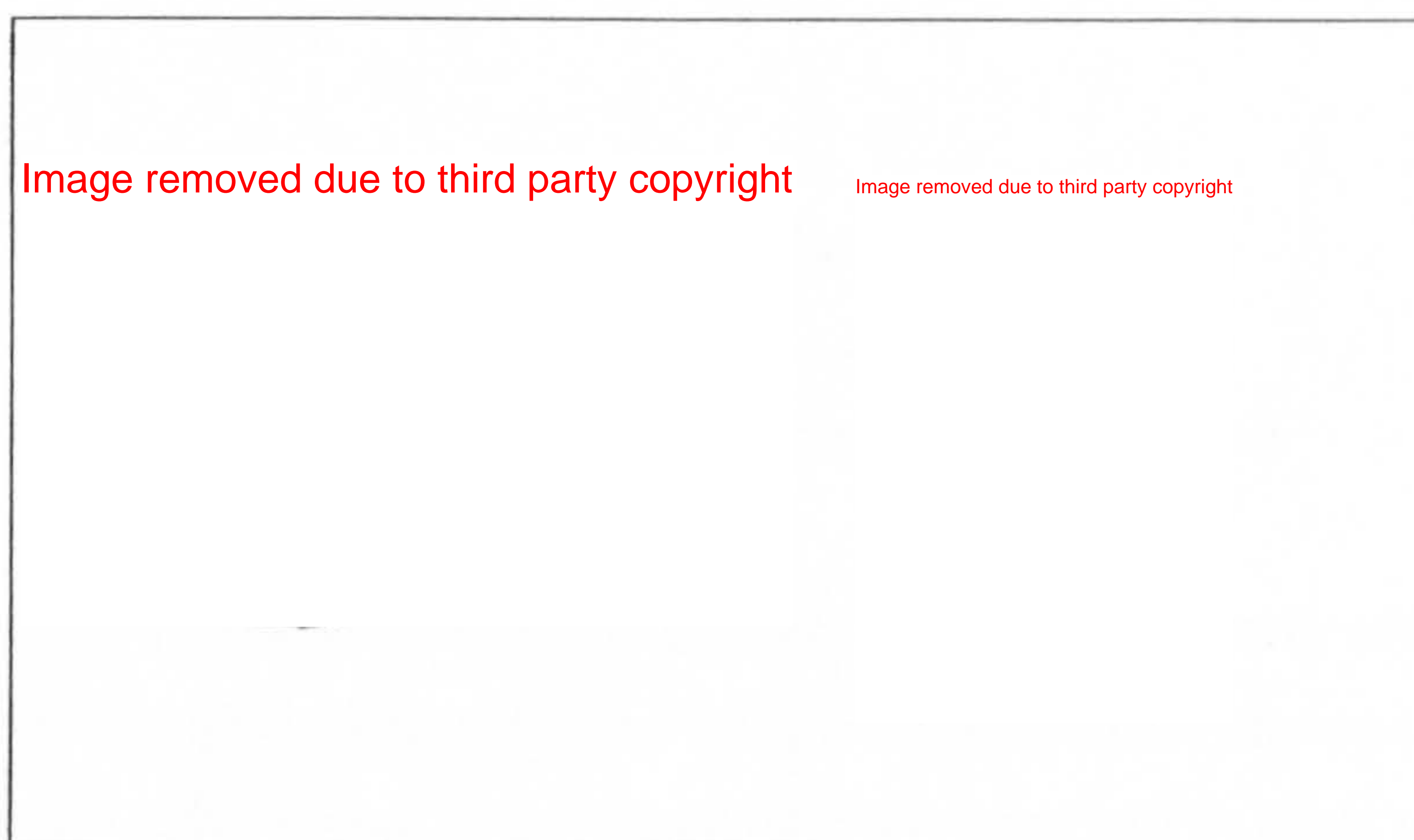


Figure 6.11: Decorative Variants

Such a conspicuous combination has potential for interpretation as emblematic, and its reproduction over time or its restriction to certain places and/or times could well have significance in terms of embodied identification strategies. To meet this requirement at this stage, the items must conform to the group specification in every respect, a judgement hard to make with confidence in a situation of fragmentary finds: it must be acknowledged that hands-on personal experience with large numbers of shoes has guided my perceptions here.

The great majority of shoes are stylistically idiosyncratic, though within a restricted repertoire. Some combinations of values do occur more frequently than others (such as gently rounded toes and low cut shoes) and some combinations never occur (such as Back-Pointed soles and elongated toes) but there is a strong chronological component to these patterns, which will be dealt with in the next section. More relevant at this stage is the existence of a few situations where values are combined to produce an appreciable number of shoes, which are identical in all but size. So multiple are the dimensions of the variation that coincidence seems unlikely. The commonest seemingly self conscious and distinctive 'type' is shown in figure 6.12 and will be brought into the overall analysis later.

**Figure 6.12: The 'York Slipper'. This particular example from London.
MLK76 <725> [1041] Taken from Pritchard 1991: 214.**



Final mention must be made of a more ambiguous type shown in the diagram used at the beginning of this text to introduce basic technical terms. The particular values that comprise this form can be found at any time and any place – they are the most enduring and widespread values in the shoemakers repertoire. They could indeed be seen as ‘negative’ or ‘residual’ values - simple finishing stitch around the edges, no heel variant, decoration or fastening device and with an ‘average’ nothing-special toe shape and coverage, a basic drawstring fastening and an oval sole with minimal taper or waisting. Given the ubiquitous nature of these characteristics considered *separately*, it is perhaps significant that only 28 shoes showing this actual combination of values feature in the sample, and these have a seemingly random distribution over space and time. Although it is possible to interpret this combination of values as a deeply traditional ‘type’, it is perhaps more probably the outcome of coincidence rather than a conscious emulation of a particular style; that it is what results when nothing more specific is chosen (though, of course the reasons for such a decision are themselves interesting).

What this section shows is that within clear limits, there is a great deal of variability in the sample – far more, indeed, than was anticipated in the early stages of this research. There are also variations in the degrees of conformity and diversity in the way in which values are combined. This footwear is, plainly, a rich source of information, to be fully quarried in the rest of this chapter and amplified in the next.

c) Change over time in the research domain

NB: See table 5.2 in previous chapter for numbering of phases

In this section, a broad outline of changes over time will be offered, with emphasis on changing frequencies and the appearance or disappearance of particular distinctive forms. At this stage, little reference will be made to regional variants, as this, ordered by chronological periods, will be the subject of the next section and will begin to move closer to the research questions being addressed.

It is important, however, to keep in mind some of the unavoidable compromises that have been made over dating. The two most significant relate to Hedeby (distorting phase 1: Hedeby almost certainly includes 12 and 2) and much of the Guildhall Yard sample from London (distorting phase 5: some broadly dated Guildhall items almost certainly come from phase 4 and 6, and in a few cases possibly from phase 3). These distortions will be particularly relevant in cases of first/last incidence. Further bias arises from the dominance of the London sample: variation specific to London could distort overall patterns. On the whole, however, only marked differences in frequency of occurrence involving a number of assemblages are used in this section.

At the risk of tedium, this section will work through the research time span systematically, emphasising change in the prioritised variables. It must be remembered, however, that certain variants are present throughout the period (see above).

i) 9th century

Around 50% of the sample from the early and mid 9th century is characterised by the vamp-seamed cut. Sometimes this is the product of one piece, cleverly cut and seamed ingeniously at vamp and back, but more commonly 3 or 4 pieces are involved. (figure 6.13)

Vamp seamed shoes have symmetrical toes, usually quite pointed but with an interesting variant whereby the sole tip is brought round to give a wedge effect. Heels are almost all of the round-backed design. The vamp-seamed design continues into the early 10th century at Hedeby, although it is quite possible that these are in fact 9th century shoes (see above). These shoes are almost all associated with a neat, standardised drawstring arrangement and the vamp seam is stitched in a highly conventionalised decorative way.

There are also, however, a number of shoes, some one- but mostly two-piece where the upper seaming is at the side, toes are more rounded and the heel is often of the Back Point type (around 50%). A few of these side-seamed shoes

have central vamp stripes, either stitched or impressed into the leather. This one-piece upper, side seamed and often with Back Point is the design, which continues into the 10th century.

**Figure 6.13 Artisan ingenuity: four ways to cut the same shoe
8th -9th century North Sea coast and Dublin.**

Image removed due to third party copyright

- a) **Elisenhof 1.6, 25-276 b) Duurstede 357.8.217 (from G-v
Waateringe 1976)**
c) **Elisenhof 15-30/145-160 d) Hedeby <207>**

Both vamp and side seamed designs favour coverage of the foot but not the ankle – both low cut and high cut shoes are very rare – and have tapered soles. Leather thongs, thread and gut are all in use for stitching.

ii) 10th Century

This is overwhelmingly dominated by the 2-piece composite (separate sole and upper) shoe where the upper is wrapped around to seam at the inner (medial) side or at the back. Seams are stitched using leather or thread. The

single piece shoe does survive, but is increasingly rare. Around 60% of the heel forms are Back Pointed, mostly inset into cuts in the upper or integrated into a back seam, but there are some striking variants where a large Back Point is tunnel stitched onto the heel. There are also some examples of Back Points decorated with impressed patterns. (see Figure 6.10) The embroidered or impressed vamp stripe does occur, but this phase is marked by a low incidence of vamp decoration (only around 15% of sample). Toes remain symmetrical, varying from rounded to gently pointed and all soles are tapered or oval: the 'wedge' toe has disappeared.

In these phases, low cut slip-on shoes (often but misleadingly called 'slippers') are most popular. In the mid-late 10th century, many of these conform so closely to a specific design that they form one of the few groupings, which could be called a 'type'. This 'style' is found well into the 11th century. At the same time, the use of the latchet and toggle fastening method increases in popularity for higher-cut shoes, although 'boots' still remain unusual. (figure 6.14). Around the middle of the 10th century, a distinctive and attractive variant on drawstrings is seen for the first time, involving multiple closely packed slits close to the foot-opening: this will become a major feature in the 11th century. Towards the end of the 10th century, the earliest example of side laces is seen: these will not come into common usage until the late 12th century. During the 10th century, there is the first proper evidence of the use of heel stiffeners and topbands.

iii) 11th century

In many ways, the first half/ three quarters of the 11th century is a continuation of the patterns shown in the 10th century, with no innovative features but an increase in quality and fineness of workmanship. The single piece shoe has disappeared and vamp seamed style is very rare: the 2-piece composite remains dominant, often with inserts and add-ons. However, by the second half of the 11th the upper is increasingly made from at least 2 major pieces.

Around the middle of the century, the use of leather thongs for stitching dies out. From now on, nearly all seams are stitched with fine thread, although repair patches continue to be often sewn on roughly with thong. The Back Pointed sole remains popular (around 60%) in the first half but is down to 50% in the second half (it will die out by the end of the next century). Low cut shoes and slip-on styles gradually decline in popularity, and there is a shift towards higher cut shoes, with so-called ankle boots becoming more common.

Latchet fastenings decline sharply in popularity, from around 20% in the first half to 8% in the second, and in the second half of the century, the multiple slits drawstring reaches the peak of its popularity (around half of all drawstrings, around 30% of total fastenings sample). By this stage, the drawstring is often highly decorative, plaited or in multiple rows. In the second half of the 11th the incidence of embroidered vamp stripe decoration also increases to around 25% of the sample, with the emergence of interesting variants, notably the slitting and either decorative rejoining of the vamp as an everted seam or the leaving of a edge-bound slit along the vamp. Other forms of decoration have, however, disappeared.

Overall shape remains unchanged for most of this century, with gently tapered soles and rounded- pointed toes. By the end of this century, however, new forms are emerging which will become dominant in the next century.

Figure 6.14 Latchet fastenings on London shoes.

a) UPT90 <468> [696]

b) UPT90 <450> [1166]

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iv) 12th century

The first half of the 12th century is the phase of greatest diversity in this sample. Alongside the 'traditional' variants are found many innovatory variants, some of which will have become dominant by the end of the century.

Although the 2-piece shoe remains common, there is an increasing tendency towards multiple piece footwear. This even extends to soles, which by the second half are sometimes made from two pieces seamed together at the instep or, in a few cases, at the toe end to allow for a greatly extended toe. There is a great variety in the way that these pieces are cut and combined. On the other hand, the vamp-seamed style still marginally survives in the earlier part of the century. Low cut shoes have disappeared and ankle boots/ low boots account for around 25% of the sample by the second half. The Back Point is still found in the first half but has almost disappeared by the second half of the century, and large heel stiffeners have become commonplace.

The 'traditional' fastening methods carry on, but the drawstring is now dominant, with the multiple slits variant in decline along with the latchet and the slip-ons. At the same time, new methods are emerging, notably lacing across the instep. There are some more examples of side laces, although this has yet to catch on. A similar concurrence of old and new is found with decoration. The first half of the 12th century has the highest incidence in the whole period of shoes decorated with vamp stripes (40%), which are at their most flamboyant at this stage (double, triple, everted, with some using multicoloured silks) (Figure 6.15). Alongside this, however, are new kinds of decoration such as openwork and elaborate patterned embroidery on the vamp and around the foot opening.

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a) Split and resewn vamp, giving a ridge effect.

London GYE92 <4329> [17396]

b) Split vamp, perhaps left open.

Borgund From Larsen 1970: Pl II

c) From the Winchester Bible: portrayal of Saul.

Oakeshott 1981: Pl 69

d) Triple stripes in red, white and green silk.

London. From Grew & De Neergaard 1988: 80

e) Ridged stripe.

Image removed due to third party copyright London. GYE92 <4454> [17187]

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Figure 6.15

12th century vamp stripe extravaganza

One of the most striking and highly visible innovatory areas concerns toe shape. The long-established rounded to gently pointed shapes continue to dominate but there is a scatter of extravagantly styled, extended and sometimes hooked toes from the early 12th century onwards. There are a couple of isolated examples of toe experimentation from earlier phases, in the form of needle-like extensions to the symmetrical toe, but it is not until this stage that toe display really takes off. By the second half of the 12th century, a modest version of the extended toe has become common.

A subtler shift involves sole shape. Throughout the preceding 3 centuries, soles had been remarkably consistent in shape. Although some are oval (these being nearly always those of infants or large males – see later), the vast majority are tapered: they do not acknowledge the instep through waisting although there is a subtle difference in the slope-back angles of the sides, which acknowledges the laterality of the shoe (i.e right or left foot). Figure 6.16 shows the outcomes of the plotting over time of an index based on the second and third slice measures of the 314 soles in the sample, using a simple formula.

$$(L2 + R2) / (L3 + R3) = W \text{ (waisting index)}$$

Where sole is waisted: $W > 1$

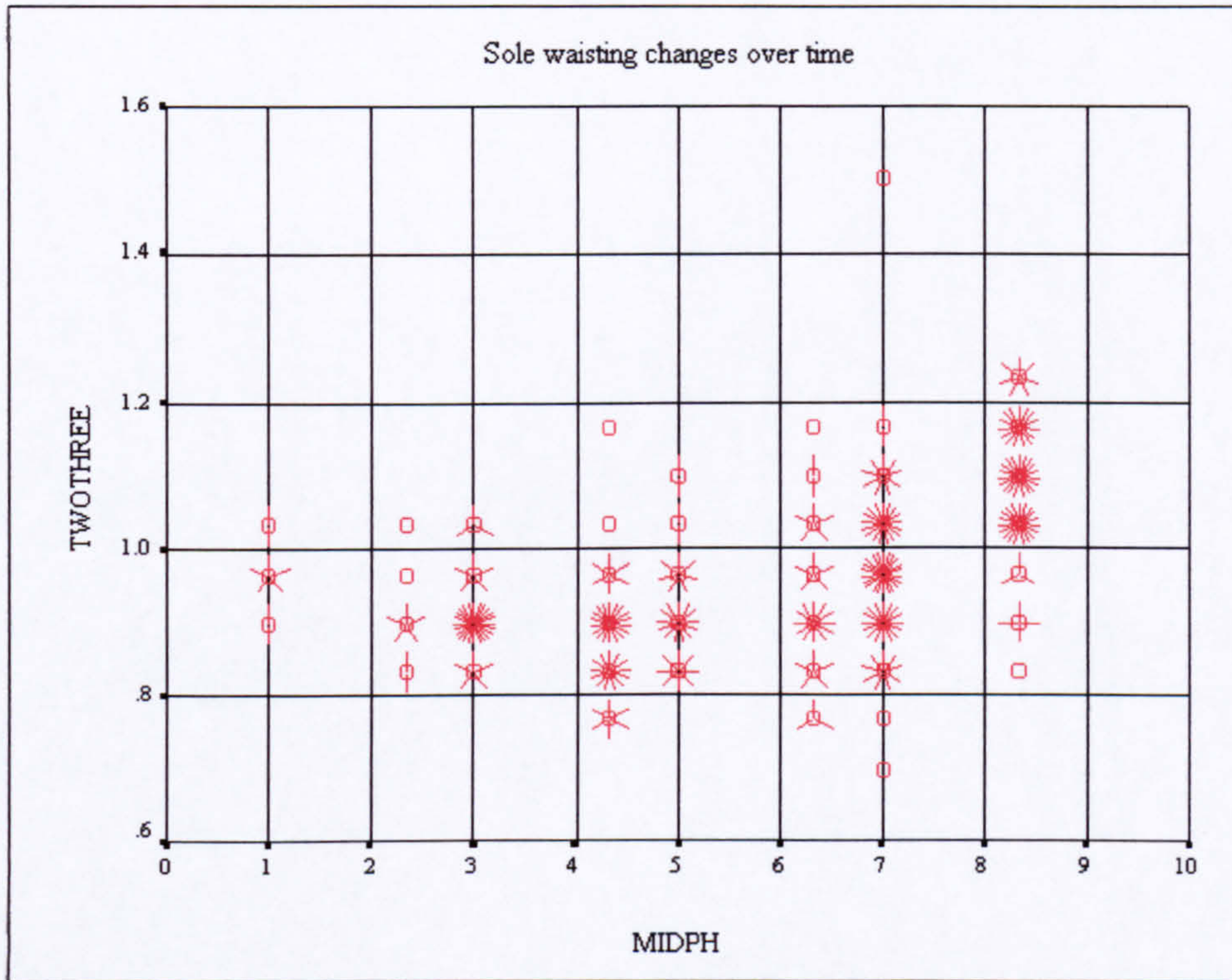
Where sole is straight: $W = 1$

Where sole is tapered or oval: $W < 1$

The following graph Fig 6.16 clearly shows the similarity of phases covering the 9th-11th centuries, and the 12th century shift towards the waisted sole. With actual examples, it is intriguing to see the earliest examples of experimental toes protruding from tapered (old-fashioned?) soles, then shifting quickly to the ‘new’ waisted soles: by the end of the century, toes have calmed down but the waisted sole has become almost universal.

NB Note that the phase numbers on this graph are not the standard ones.

Figure 6.16 Sole waisting change over time
(In this case 1=AD800, 8=AD1200)



Further emphasis of the early 12th century diversity comes from the use of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) for sole shape. As explained earlier, I had hoped that PCA would assist in the chronological sequencing of soles over time. As it is, the outcomes of the PCA have been much more curious. The first three components, accounting for 81% of the variability, seemed to relate to width/length proportions (46%), tilt (25%) and something more enigmatic (9%). Of these three, only the first had any seeming patterning over time. This could, however, be misleading: at one end of the scale were slender, narrow soles and at the other extreme were fat, oval soles, ALL of which were very small sizes even though the measurements had been standardised for foot length. This will be returned to later, but it would seem that age factors partly outweighed any trends over time here. The second and

third components did not show any patterning over time. The fourth, however, accounting for 7% of the variance, did show a curious relationship whereby Phase 7 (early 12th century on this SPSS graph) showed a greater range of variation than any other phase.

Obviously the Standard Deviation for a Principal Component (PC) considered as a whole is 1 but the table below shows how the SD varied for PC4 values grouped by time phases. Phase 8 is much more comparable in both range and content with the other phases. This is because this PC picked out at its extremes the elongated toes at one end and the bulbous, swollen nipple toes (which became standard in the late 12th) at the other end. Other values are similar except for Phase 1 (early 9th), which shows a high degree of conformity.

Table 6.3 Standard Deviation for Principal Component 4 (sole shape)
The phase numbers are those shown in Fig 6.16

| Phase | S.D. for PC4s |
|-------|---------------|
| 1 | .88 |
| 2 | .37 |
| 3 | .72 |
| 4 | .64 |
| 5 | .79 |
| 6 | .71 |
| 7 | 1.15 |
| 8 | .69 |

Over the whole research period, proportions of worn shoes remain remarkably constant at around 80% of the relevant samples. Proportions of repaired worn shoes do vary, however, with repair rates much higher in the 12th century (around 50%) than in the 11th (around 20%) with intermediate rates in the 9th /10th centuries. The quality measure suggests some trend over time away from the

simple 'blob' shoe in that the proportion of zero score decreases from 90% in the 9th century to 10% in the 12th century, with a corresponding increase in more labour intensive footwear over the research period. This summarises the trend over time towards more complex construction, and the greater uses of decoration and fine quality finish.

Looked at overall, there appear to be two main landmark points in this chronology. One is at the end of the 9th /early 10th with the displacement of the vamp-seamed, round backed shoe by a design that had formerly been slightly less popular. The second landmark stage seems to be the early 12th century with the concurrent flowering of the long established and the entirely new. In chapter 7, secondary sources are used to further examine the reliability of these major shifts and in chapter 8 the relationship between these archaeologically evidenced changes and those exhibited (performed?) in iconography will be explored.

d) The relationship between footwear variability, physiological age and sex.

In the previous section, overt interpretation was consciously avoided, although, as has previously been fully discussed, awareness of the contingency and artificiality of the 'data' was never forgotten. In this section however, the constructs are such that interpretation has to be far more explicitly acknowledged. What is being sought here is evidence for an embodied expression (conscious or otherwise) of *difference* based on physiological maturity and/or sex. This investigation is only possible because of the following pre-assumptions.

- a) Foot length can be reliably estimated from shoe length.
- b) Foot length varies with physical maturity up to early adolescence and after that varies according to the sex of the adult wearer.
- c) Statistically significant differences in the kinds of footwear worn by individuals of different physiological sizes suggest significant identification strategies in action.

- d) The durability and comprehensiveness of such differentiation, considered over time and space, could suggest the degree to which such strategies were taken for granted (naturalised, doxic) or challenged.

To investigate this, foot lengths based on the measurement of complete soles are used. These are derived from a sample of 314 soles, 47% of which are dated to the 10th and 11th centuries. This will be supplemented by the use of foot length calculated from upper measurement, a sample of 71. These upper sizes are less useful, partly because they were only carried out in the post-pilot stages and do not include London and the other pilot assemblages, and partly because of the difficulties of estimating foot length from a flattened-out 3 dimensional piece. These later difficulties were ameliorated by using only toe-heel measurements and making a correction for foot length using the toe type category.

For the sole measurements, seven foot length categories (flen) are used, with the ‘adult’ categories 3-6 subdivided if fine distinction is needed. For the upper measurements, only four categories are used. These two scales are difficult to match rigorously, but I would suggest the following as ‘best estimate’, based on comparison of the overall distribution patterns of sizes.

Table 6.4 Relating foot lengths based on soles and uppers

| Upper categories | Sole categories |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 (child) | 1-3a |
| 2 (smaller adult, mostly female) | 3b-4 |
| 3 (larger adult, mixed sex) | 4-5 |
| 4 (large adult, mostly male) | 6-7 |

Frequencies of occurrence of the variations in prioritised variables were tabled against these foot length categories and contingency tests using Chi sq carried out, with a null hypothesis of no relationship between foot length and the

variability of the variable. The results are tabled below, and worked examples can be found in Appendix 5. Less common variants will be considered separately. Upper samples are used in the case of vamp decoration and numbers of pieces used in the composition as soles gave too small a sample to be useful.

The sole shape test was carried out using Principal Component (PC) 1, derived from an analysis based in L and R slices 2-9. Examination of this PC, which accounted for nearly half of the variance in sole shape, suggested that it was associated with fatness of the sole, with oval soles at one end and slender narrow soles at the other. The PC1 values were grouped into 4 categories using the quartile values.

Table 6.5 Results of Chi Sq Tests

| Vis- ibility | Variable | Basis of length estimate. | Samp size | Critical value for chi sq at 5% for appropriate d/f | Chi sq obtained | Accept/reject null hypothesis |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------|---|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| High | Toes | Soles | 244 | 18.3070 | 26.6113 | Reject |
| High | Cover | Soles | 117 | 9.48773 | 3.14372 | Accept |
| Medium | Vamp dec | uppers | 133 | 7.81473 | 12.0935 | Reject |
| Medium | Fast | Soles | 92 | 9.48773 | 9.83371 | ?? |
| Low | Heel form | Soles | 132 | 9.48773 | 14.5712 | Reject |
| Low | Compos ition | Uppers | 123 | 9.48773 | 4.63724 | Accept |
| N/a | Sole shape | Soles | 314 | 21.0261 | 32.920 | Reject |

In the cases of coverage and numbers of composing pieces, a relationship with foot length comes out as improbable. There is a slight tendency in the table for

the smallest shoes to be underrepresented for low and high coverage, but not by enough to be statistically significant at the required level. It would seem that the variability in foot/ankle coverage was not to do with child/adult or male/female differentials in the sample as a whole. Nor were such possible 'structuring' dispositions relevant, it would seem, to whether the shoe was a simple two-piece (sole upper), a more complex set of pieces or a one piece. It is worth noting that coverage is a highly visible characteristic and it will be interesting in chapter 8 to see whether the representational images of the time show a similar irrelevance of foot exposure to sexuality and maturity.

Fastening types come up as borderline to probability of a relationship. Inspection of the sole measurements table suggests a link between smaller sizes and a tendency towards drawstring fastenings with larger sizes more likely to be slip ons. The elaborate latchet style, never very common, is distributed much as expected. Checking with upper categories do, however, give a different outcome, with a higher proportion of slip-ons for the smaller sizes. This is almost certainly related to the bias in the upper sample towards York and Dublin, and the absence of London and other pilot area samples: this will be returned to in the next section. The small number of multiple slit drawstring fastenings that could be related to foot size showed a strong tendency towards the smaller sizes, and could be associated with female identity.

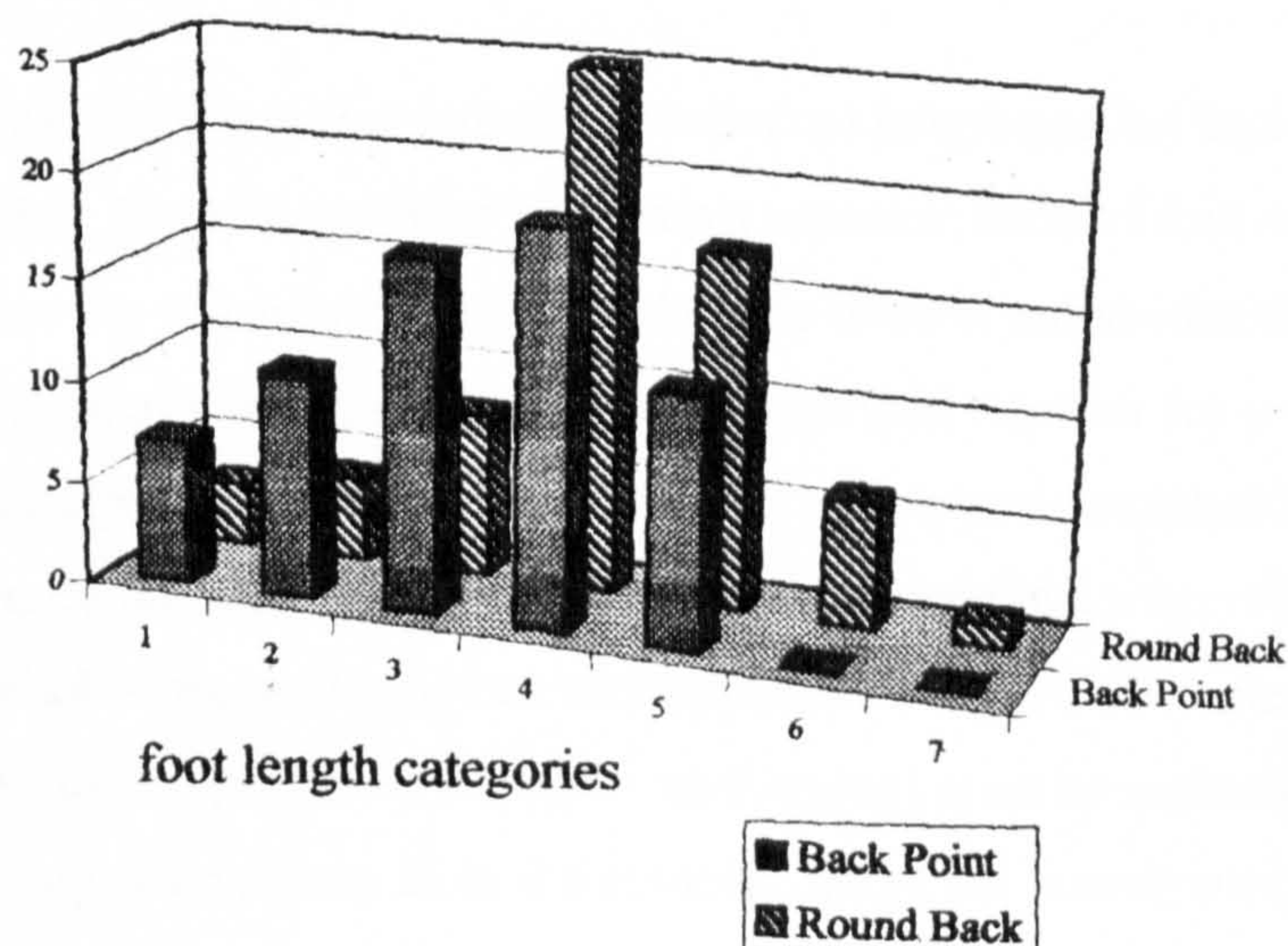
There is a strong probability that toe shape and sole fatness are related in a significant way to foot length. Toe shape and sole fatness do, of course, have a relationship in themselves. Thus, in both cases, the smallest sizes are the fattest soles and are over represented with blunt toes, and underrepresented with sharper toes. With the PC1 measure, it is worth noting that the five most extreme values at the 'fattest' end are all derived from the soles of infant's shoes. The number of small children's soles in the sample is small, but a scatter plot of these 'category 1' lengths against the waisting index hints that at about 135/140mm the index increases, showing less divergence outwards and in some (chronologically later) cases shows waisting. Allowing for 5% shrinkage in conservation (Spriggs 1987: 44, Grew & De Neergaard 1988: 102-3) 140 mm gives 147mm, which corresponds to modern child's shoe size 5 (continental size 22). This, with

modern foot sizes, corresponds to around age 2/3 years old: does the embodiment of babyhood end at this age?

With the unusual toe shapes (elongated, hooked, pinch-pointed etc), the smallest size is ftenecat 3, with the great majority being 4b, 5, 6 or 7. This does suggest that these are associated with adult males, with the few smaller ones being perhaps small men or mid-adolescent boys. (These innovative toes are never found in association with the Back Point: the possible significance of this will become evident shortly). Inspection of the actual Contingency Table (see Appendix 7) however, does show that with adult's sizes the association is complex. The PC1 measure shows that the larger sizes (5, 6 and 7) shoes are more likely to be skinny, whereas the smaller adult (3, 4) tends towards the fat. Toe shape, whilst 'fitting' with the smaller sizes, is more polarised with larger sizes. This reflects the complexity of sole shape, and the hazards of feature-by-feature analysis: toe type 1 (blunt) occurs in association with 10th and 11th century tapered soles and with slender 12th century waisted soles.

Heel form is another association with size that has a high degree of probability, approaching 100%. The link between the Back Pointed sole, thought by Hald to be an 'ethnic indicator', and small sizes was first noted at the pilot stage. The association has held up throughout the sample, and is well illustrated in Figure 6.17.

Fig 6.17: Heels and Foot lengths for 10th /11th c. primary sample



It holds for all of the large 10th -11th century samples, such as York, Dublin and London (the BP is relatively uncommon in the 9th century and is disappearing in the 12th), and it is hard to avoid the conclusion that this is a signifier of feminine identity. That some small sizes are not Back Pointed can be explained by the overlap between adult female and small male/ adolescent male sizes. If this is the case, then some interesting points arise. Firstly, it would follow that two of the few emic 'types' identified in the research area i.e the AOPs and the 'York slipper', are female shoes styles. The 'York slippers' show a particularly marked association with small sizes: out of 29 examples of this 'emic type' found at York, 28 fell into the size range foot length 3-4 with one borderline to 5. In London and Dublin, the largest ones were size category 4.

Secondly, the predominance of the Back Pointed shoe in the 10th and 11th centuries takes on potentially greater significance. It does not, of course, necessarily follow that the populations represented by these assemblages were demographically dominated by females. It could be that women tended to 'turnover' more shoes than the men, owning and discarding at a higher rate, or perhaps a more subtle explanation, perhaps involving women's shoes being less likely to be recycled (and thereby totally lost), and/ or more likely to be discarded in archaeologically recoverable contexts, is appropriate. These intriguing questions will be raised further later, but it is worth noting at this stage that heel form is a low visibility feature.

Finally, the tests show a probable link between foot length and the incidence of vamp decoration. Vamp decoration is the most common form of footwear decoration over the research period, and takes the form of embroidered or impressed stripes, of varying types, which were lumped together for the chi sq. test. This simple presence/absence table showed a clear positive relationship between presence and larger adult sizes, although the smallest sizes (children's) worked out much as expected given a null hypothesis. Again, the regional limitations of this sample (most seriously, no London) must be remembered. A further intriguing point comes from the associations of the heavily embroidered footwear from 12th century Bergen. This was not included in the chi tests, but the

few cases permitting foot size measurement suggested that these shoes were small adult rather than larger adult i.e. female shoes. The limitations of the Bergen sample have already been discussed, but there is a hint here of yet another 12th century shift in emphasis, in this case related to the presence of elaborate decoration on female rather than male shoes. That this elaborate embroidery in coloured silk could and should be re-classified as high visibility is another intriguing angle.

What, then, has emerged? Firstly, that most of the variability attributable to maturity and sex differences is matter of degree. Thus, it would seem, overall, men are more likely to wear decorated shoes, to wear shoes which are relatively elongated and display more diversity than female shoes and that it is men who are wearing the innovative elongated and hooked toe shoes. Women's shoes tend to be less extreme. Children, once past infancy, wear shoes identical in styling and cut to the adults except perhaps for a slight tendency away from the low cut and slip on varieties (active lives?). The quality measure does not suggest any significant difference related to sex or maturity: a child's shoe is as likely as an adult's to be of complex construction and finish. The one variant that does seem to be absolute, however, is the heel form.

At the risk of jumping ahead, it is appropriate to point out that the distribution of the Back Point is universal during the 10th -11th centuries in this corner of Europe, according to this sample, and secondary evidence will support this. (see Chapter 7). This distribution is a classic version of what Carr calls a 'uniform unbounded' distribution of an obscure low-visibility trait – obscure in the sense that not once is the presence of a Back Point definitely indicated in a contemporary representation (see Chap 8). Carr interprets such patterning as an 'active, unconscious projection of panhuman archetypal themes about relationships e.g. gender relationships, dominant to subordinate etc ' (Carr 1995: 178). Such an interpretation is further enhanced by the high ranking of this variant in terms of design and production – it belongs to the very first conceptualising of the shoe by the maker. Is this an aspect of 'vernacular style'? More on this in the last chapter.

e) Spatial patterning in the research domain

This is the last major section of this chapter. The variability of the footwear has been explored and documented and broad changes over time outlined. Links between sex, maturity and stylistic variability have been investigated, with at least one strong link identified. The time has come to investigate the dynamics of similarity/difference between assemblages, using the methods outlined in the last chapter. The outcomes of the PCO analysis were plotted as 3-D scatters, using SPSS. For the more unusual and localised variants, distributions were plotted on maps. With continuous scale variables such as PCO and PCs, scatter graphs were used to plot them against nominal categories: for some purposes they were converted to nominal categories themselves.

This section will be ordered in terms of chronological sequence, to ensure that the comparisons are, as far as possible, of genuinely contemporary assemblages. To circumvent to some extent the limitations placed by the Hedeby datings, and to maximise the samples available, the 8 possible 50-year phases were grouped as follows for analysis

- Phases 12 and 1: AD 850-949
- Phases 2: AD 950-999
- Phases 3 and 4: AD1000-1099
- Phases 5 & 6: AD1100-1199

Each phase is well represented in the tables for the main traits. Phase 11 (AD 800-849) was represented by only two assemblages, Oxford and Elisenhof, so use of a similarity matrix was not appropriate. It perhaps needs to be stated yet again that the dates assigned to items, although in some cases subject to compromise, are used as given and have not at this stage been tampered with on typological grounds, however tempting this has become.

This section is presented as a summary of the main points of difference and similarity in the footwear of the period. It is, inevitably, selective. The detailed

data on which these statements have been based can be found in Appendices 6 and 7.

In the early 9th century, the contrast between footwear from the only two assemblages, Oxford and Elisenhof, is very marked indeed. All of the footwear from the admittedly small Oxford assemblage is within the repertoire that will become dominant over Northern Europe for the next 250 years. All are separate soled shoes with one-piece uppers seamed at the side, with rounded toes and a variety of fastening types including slip-ons, 2 latchet styles and 1 drawstring. Low, middle and high cut footwear is represented. 6 out of 9 assessable shoes have bound edges, one has a vamp stripe and another (a child's shoe) has a triple fanned impressed stripe. Three out of five assessable items have Back Points. The Elisenhof footwear is very different, except for the symmetrical tapered shape. Over 80% are seamed along the vamp, not at the side, with various cuts (1-, 2- and 3-piece) to produce this effect. (see figure 6.12)

This design seems to result in a pointed toe, but in 9 cases the toe part of the sole has been brought round to form a wedge effect. (see Figure 6.7: toe types). This carefully made variant is also found in the nearby (50 km by land) Hedeby assemblage, compromise-dated to the next phase, and it would seem reasonable to suppose that these Hedeby shoes are contemporary with the more securely dated Elisenhof shoes. This distinctive toe-style is not found in any other primary assemblage in this project, and needs to be checked in the next chapter. All of the Elisenhof footwear is drawstring fastened, using a curved band of slots close to the foot opening, edges are unbound though neatly cut and nearly all footwear is of medium height with no low cut shoes: 96% of the footwear has round backed heels. In a curious way, the Elisenhof shoes are more conformist in the high visibility features and more adventurous with low-visibility cutting approaches whereas the Oxford shoe are conformist in cut but more idiosyncratic in the way that different visibility traits are combined. The most interesting point, however, is that a small number of shoes like the Oxford shoes are found at Elisenhof but not vice versa.

This spatial pattern continues into the next century, where Hedeby is marked out as 'different' on almost every count. By this stage, the large assemblages at London, Dublin and York are coming 'on stream', as well as smaller ones from Bruges, Rouen, Winchester, Durham and Gloucester, so Hedeby's 'difference' is particularly significant. Hedeby's difference is mainly rooted in a continuation of the repertoire already noted at Elisenhof, whereas everywhere else the repertoire is much more like that of Oxford. More than 50% of the Hedeby shoes are vamp seamed and the one-piece cut remains in use: elsewhere, only Bruges and Dublin have a few similar cut shoes (setting aside the one-piece AOPs of London as a special case). 19% of Hedeby shoes have wedge-toes and most of the rest have pointed toes, one with a drawn-out needle-point. Hedeby has only 1 low cut shoe out of a sample of 46, at a time when low cut shoes are very popular elsewhere (37% York, 38% Dublin, 38% London).

Almost all shoes are drawstring fastened (whereas elsewhere slip-on styles are popular -72% York, 71% Dublin, 60% London, only 15% Hedeby). 27% of Hedeby shoes also display the earliest examples in the research zone of the multiple slits decorative variant which will become popular later in many places in the 11th century. Given the Hedeby dating compromises, footwear with this variant could well be later than AD950, especially as it is popular in the succeeding Schleswig assemblage. Hedeby does have a small proportion of latches (around 6%) but no evidence for use of toggles.

One area in which the Hedeby shoes have become very like those of the rest of the research area is in the heel forms. 49% of the Hedeby shoes have Back Points, some of these (4) associated with the vamp seamed cut. One is even incorporated ingeniously into a one-piece cut. Table 6.6 gives the proportion of Back Pointed shoes for these phases. Given the suggestion of a link between Back Points and small adult (female?) sizes this is an interesting pattern. I would suggest, however, from examination of context and dating criteria used in the original study that the absence of Back Points in Durham is the outcome of archaeological misdating rather than a significant historical feature.

Table 6.6 Proportions of Back Pointed heels in the 10th century

| Assemblage | Sample assessable | % with Back Points |
|------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| London | 102 | 71% |
| York | 56 | 55% |
| Hedeby | 49 | 49% |
| Dublin | 43 | 49% |
| Winchester | 15 | 80% |
| Bruges | 12 | 75% |
| Durham | 5 | 0 |
| Gloucester | 2 | 50% |
| Rouen | 1 | 100% |

Winchester, although a much smaller assemblage, is very similar to London at this stage. The more substantial Bruges assemblage does, however, offer some interesting contrasts with the other assemblages. Whilst, like Hedeby, low-cut slip ons are not favoured, 29% of Bruges shoes have latchet-toggle fastenings, unlike Hedeby. Like Hedeby, Bruges has a couple of 1-piece cuts and at least one ‘classic’ vamp seamed shoe but toe shapes are like London. The Bruges shoes are more often decorated and in one case the leather around the foot opening is ‘castellated’ in a unique style.

The strong similarities between Dublin, London and York in the early 10th century are already evident and will continue into the later part of the 10th century. Dublin retains some tenuous links with Hedeby at first (a few vamp seamed shoes) but generally shoemakers in the three settlements are operating with identical repertoires, though with different emphases. In York, the low cut shoe remains popular throughout the 10th century. It is indeed here that the earliest examples of the ‘slipper type’ are found (dated 850-909). This standardised ‘type’ is found in London and Dublin by the later 10th and into the

early 11th century, but not, on primary evidence, anywhere else. Indeed, it is appropriate to say at this point that with eastern assemblages the very low cut shoe is never more than marginal, possibly exotic. The slipper type is easy to cut and make and, in York at least, rarely decorated. Later in the 10th /early 11th, another kind of 'slipper' is being made in York, this time with a cleverly inset tongue and a heel-stiffener sewn into the heel seam. This latter type is less well represented in the York assemblage but equally standardised. This variant is not taken up elsewhere, certainly not in London which by the late 10th /early 11th is chasing its own rainbows. The common type of slipper – which, if the female-BP link is accepted are women's shoes- has disappeared by the mid 11th century.

In many ways, then, the basic similarity between the three big assemblages is continued through the 10th century. In York, however, low cut shoes are more popular than in London and Dublin, in Dublin pointed toes are more popular and in London the latchet and toggle fastening – rare elsewhere though not unknown - becomes very popular (33% of shoes, compared with 13% in York, none in Dublin during these phases). In Dublin, there is a single example of a side laced shoe, a fastening type not known from elsewhere until the 12th /13th century (Goubitz 2001): there will be several more from 12th century Dublin. The multi-slitted drawstring also makes an earlier appearance in York and Dublin than it does in London, with these samples.

One striking spatial difference relates to decoration. More than 50% of London shoes at this time are decorated with vamp stripes, both embroidered and impressed with examples of double, triple and fanned-out stripes. Dublin has 3 examples of slit and re-stitched vamp stripes, a style which will become more widespread in the early 11th. Elsewhere, decoration is absent. This high frequency and variety of decoration in London will continue through the 11th century reaching a peak in the early-mid 12th century. In comparison, the shoes of York and Dublin are generally very plain. Another more spatially constrained and unusual type of decoration occurs in the mid-late 10th century. This is found only in Winchester, London and York and involves patterning on the Back Point. Unlike vamp stripes, this is a low visibility variant, and is in this sense intriguing – who saw this decoration? The only situation in which the heels of shoes are 'on

display' is when the wearer is kneeling or standing with back to the viewer – are these shoes for display in church? Or a subversive gesture?

Finally for the late 10th century, the small group of 14 shoes from London, known as the AOPs, must be given attention. The features of these shoes lie outside the repertoire of all other shoes of this period represented in this sample, or indeed in the secondary sources to be discussed and incorporated in the next chapter. There are some resemblances to shoes found in the Irish bogs and this will be more fully outlined in the next (and last) section of this chapter. For now, they remain a near-complete anomaly in the Mid-Medieval footwear of Northern Europe.

The 11th century brings Borgund on stream, also Norwich. Borgund is particularly useful as it is located well to the north of the other sites and is accessible only by sea: contact with Dublin along the Sea Road west of Scotland is shorter than the journey to London, Rouen or Hedeby. A small part of the Duisburg assemblage is also dated to this phase. York, Dublin and London continue to be well represented.

At this point it is worth reviewing the situation for the material used to join soles and uppers. Information on this can be given by very small sole and upper fragments, and shows strong spatial and chronological patterning. It would have been used as a low visibility variable except for the fact that I have reservations about the reliability of my diagnosis in the absence of the use of the microscope to examine fibres. Nevertheless, the contrasts are so sharp that they need attention.

At no stage do shoemakers in the more easterly locations use leather thong for this purpose. In the early 9th century, Oxford and Elisenhof are perfectly opposite in this respect. (Oxford all leather, Elisenhof all thread) Hedeby, Schleswig, Borgund, Bergen and Duisburg shoes are all stitched together with some kind of thread. It is perhaps important to mention here that the Irish Bog shoes are also not stitched together with leather thong. The only exceptions to this are three examples from Hedeby, which, based on the pattern of the stitching, I would diagnose as Anglo-Saxon exotics. In London, York and Winchester, on the other

hand, the use of thin leather thonging is overwhelmingly dominant until the 11th century and in London continues to be used to some extent into the 12th century (although this may be an indicator of an earlier start to settlement in the Guildhall yard area than has been given). The limited sample from Rouen also shows the use of leather as standard until the 11th century. In Dublin the position is more mixed, with both practices common in the 10th century but a steady shift away from the use of leather thonging in the late 10th and 11th centuries. 10th century Bruges and Gloucester also show a mixture of approaches. The footwear of 12th century Lynn is entirely thread stitched. The most anomalous assemblage is Durham, which seems to be the only westerly location where leather thonging was never used: I have already made it clear that I think the 10th century dating of the Durham footwear is deeply suspect, but even so this is a curiosity, especially given that leather thonged shoes dominate in nearby York and are not unknown in 11th century Norwich.

For the 11th century, Borgund makes a good starting point here, given its relative remoteness. Although placed in the late 11th century slot, the Borgund footwear is probably contemporary with some of the Schleswig assemblage though not with Hedeby. At Borgund as well as at Schleswig, the vamp-seamed style (multi-piece by this stage) survives. This style, which does not seem to have penetrated the British Isles (though a few examples come from early Dublin), was the dominant style at Elisenhof 200 years earlier. The assemblage is also lacking in latchet fastenings, though these still remain popular in York, London and Norwich: the great majority of shoes (78%) are fastened using the multi-slit variant seen earlier in Dublin and Bruges. This decorative style is now found in York (17%) and London (11%) as well as Dublin (15% for these phases). The style is also found in Schleswig (33%) and Duisburg (4%), which are dated to early 12th century.

Borgund also resembles London in that these are the only two assemblages at this stage, which have examples of the split-rejoined vamp stripe, a style that remains in fashion in London into the 12th century (though nowhere else). A further link with London comes from the striking resemblance between two complete children's shoes from Borgund and a child's shoe from New Fresh Wharf in London, all dated to the late 11th century (Fig 6.19). Unlike London, however, the

Borgund assemblage has 5 examples of the 'nipple toe' which will become dominant in Duisburg in the 12th century, otherwise favouring blunt toes.

In one startling way, Dublin and Borgund are alike for these phases. Both have a very high proportion of Back Pointed heels – 90% for Dublin and 73% for Borgund. Again, these are all associated with small sizes – indeed, the largest size for Borgund is 5a with most the rest 1-3, and in Dublin the largest is 4b, again with nearly all in the 2-3 range. Given the relatively high number of 1-2 sizes (children's shoes) in these assemblages, this being confirmed by upper size analysis, I suspect that these both represent female/ child dominated assemblages.

Fig 6.18 Identical London and Borgund children's shoes.

Image removed due to third party copyright

a) Borgund, Norway. From Larsen 1970 Plate V

b) New Fresh Wharf, London. From Pritchard 1991: 227

Elsewhere, the Back Point continues to show 40-60% frequencies, this applying even to Schleswig, which has been slotted into the early 12th century. The one

exception is Duisburg, where the Back Point has almost disappeared by the late 11th century.

Towards the end of the 11th century, a major shift begins to take place in the shape of the soles, with the appearance of the waisted sole. Until this time the only conceivable sole shapes had been oval or tapered. This new concept appears quite abruptly beside the old styles: this is not a gradual evolution. (There are, admittedly, 3 examples of waisted soles dated to the early 10th century. One of these is a misdated Roman insole (Rouen), one a wear deformation not a true cut (Winchester) and the third, from York is so 12th century in all respects (not just waisting) that, whatever my resolutions about not typologising away variation, I cannot take it seriously). The new design shows up in London at the turn of the century at Billingsgate and there is one example from Borgund, probably also late 11th /early 12th. There are, however, 2 apparently securely dated examples of this revolutionary new approach from early 11th century York. The innovatory nature of shoe-making at York has already been touched on (see above on slippers) and this may well be another ‘first’.

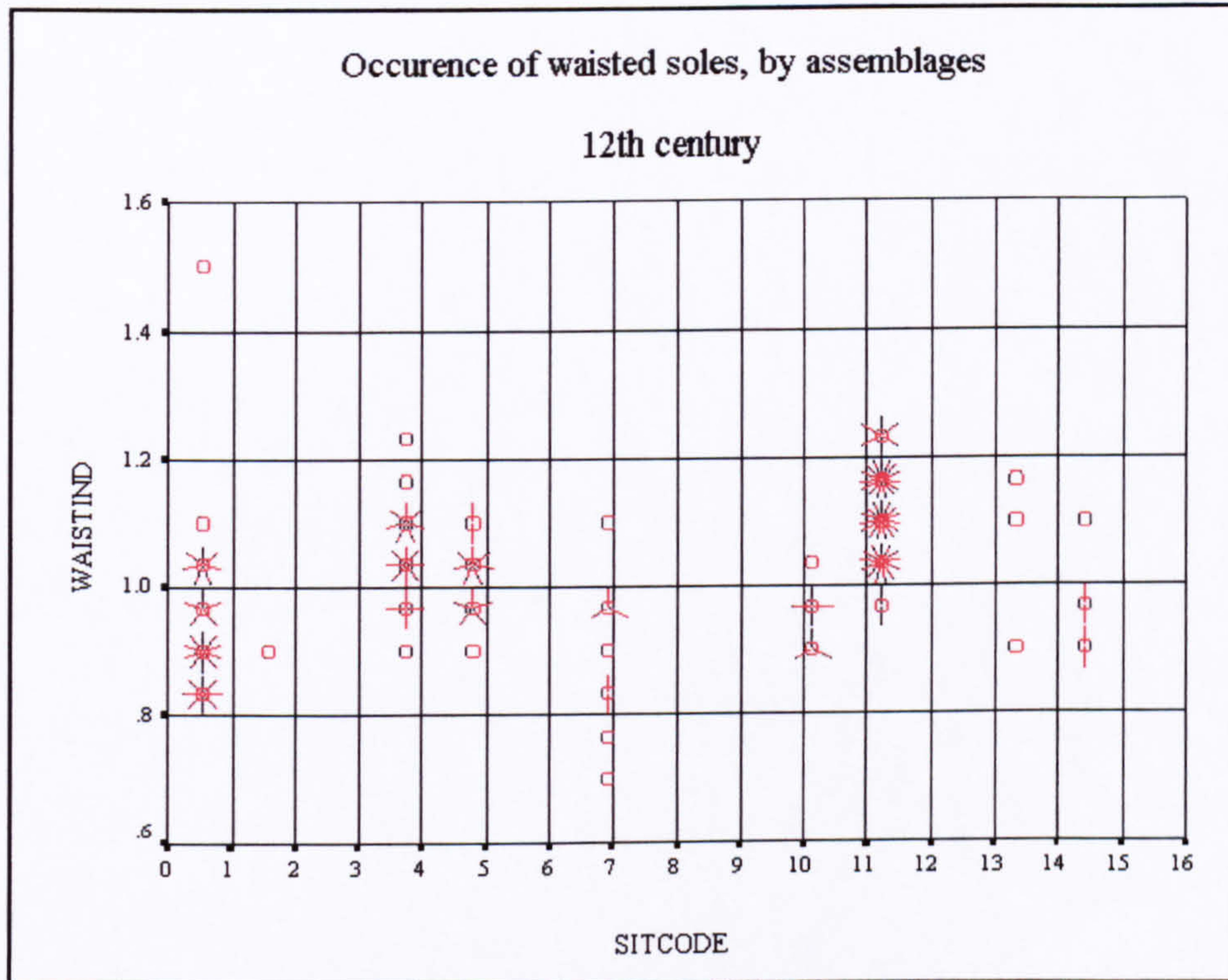
This pattern needs pursuing into the 12th century. Unfortunately, no 12th century York footwear was available for study, but Figure 6.19 shows some interesting patterns for the 12th century elsewhere. Thus take-up of the new sole style seems to have been very slow in London, Schleswig, Durham, Dublin and Winchester and much more rapid in Rouen, Lynn and Duisburg. As will shortly be seen, this pattern correlates with other old/new contrasts.

Figure 6.19 12th century sole waisting by assemblage.

1= LON, 2= WIN, 4=ROU, 5=LYN, 7=SCH

10=DUR, 11= DUI, 13= BER, 14= DBN

<1= tapered, 1=straight sided, >1=waisted.



The 12th century is a period of great change in footwear in Northern Europe. By the end of the century it is universally thread stitched and commonly multi-piece. The Back Pointed heel has disappeared and the tapered sole replaced universally with waisted soles. The symmetrical rounded-pointed toes have been replaced with a bewildering variety of forms, sometimes extravagantly grotesque. The vamp stripe has gone, and decoration involves embroidered and impressed patterns and/or openwork. Fastening straps laced or buttoned (?) and side lacings have appeared and the low cut shoe has been replaced by the higher shoe with

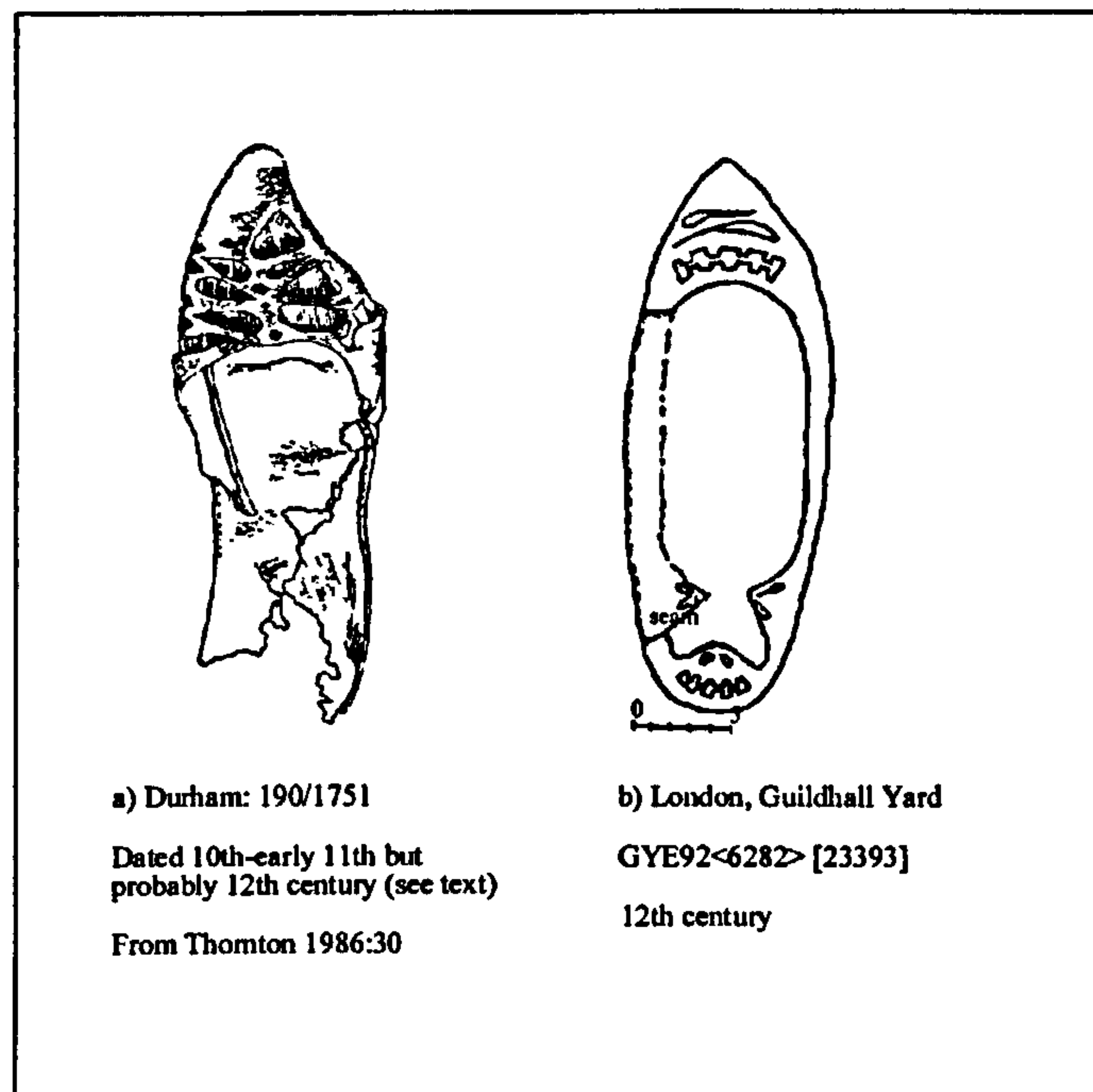
boots becoming more popular. What are interesting here are spatial differences in the rate of take-up of these innovations.

This follows very much the lines indicated by the uptake of the waisted soles. Thus Schleswig, Durham and London shoemakers continue to produce shoes with vamp stripes well into these phases, whereas in Bergen by the mid-12th highly innovative, elaborately patterned, minutely embroidered shoes are common. This contrast is heightened by the fact that in the first part of the 12th century in London, more than half of the shoes are decorated and the vamp stripe is seen at its highest stage of development – multiple stripes, often in coloured silk, delicate skilled stitching. Where innovation does occur in London i.e. huge extended toes, these are in shoes of quite crude manufacture, often undecorated and the toes are tacked onto tapered soles of the ‘old’ shape. Furthermore, these peculiar toes have disappeared from London by the later 12th century and there does not appear to be any popular take-up of more modest versions such as the standardised (templated?) Duisburg ‘nipple toe’ and the Bergen pinched toe. The same phenomenon can be seen with fastenings in 12th century London shoes, in that there are many examples of elaborations on the traditional drawstring – double rows, plaited threads, silk sometimes used – but no signs of innovatory fastening techniques. Side lacings, for example, are not found until the 13th century even though they are found in Dublin in the early 12th century. By the later half, though, 21% of the London footwear is of the multi-drawstring low boots type common at Duisburg (41%). This kind of boot is widespread at the end of the 12th century.

One very anomalous shoe found in Guildhall Yard, London and dated to the period AD 1045-1124 is illustrated in Figure 6.20. This is found in context with the finest quality ‘traditional’ shoes ever found in London. Although classified as ‘openwork’ this does not really seem to be an early example of the vamp patterning which became fashionable in 13th century London (Grew & De Neergaard 1988: 16). Neither is this like the slightly later 12th century Bergen designs where punched holes formed an integral part of the embroidered pattern. The closest resemblance is to a shoe from Durham, dated erroneously to the 10th century. One shoe from Borgund shows something like this, although seemingly

amateur. There is nothing like these from anywhere else in the primary sample, and this must be looked at again in the next chapter; I suspect that these are exotics.

Figure 6.20 Possible exotics



It is all too easy with 12th century footwear to become fascinated by the luxurious conservatism of London or the luxurious innovation of Bergen. There are other less showy sites. Yet these too seem to group into the ‘progressive’ and the ‘traditional’, to use admittedly loaded terms. Schleswig, Dublin, Norwich and Durham remain in the ‘old ways’ (except for those side-lacings in Dublin). The 12th century footwear from Lynn, Duisburg and Rouen belongs almost entirely to the later middle ages.

This section has been a summary of the main points, as I see them, of contrast and similarity in the footwear of the period. It is, inevitably, selective.

f) Preliminary Interpretation

The very act of summarising in the earlier sections of this chapter is, of course highly interpretative in terms of assigning significance. The very use of terms

such as 'traditional' or 'innovative' in the last section is clearly an act of construction of meaning. This last section in this lengthy chapter is, then, an attempt to draw out the main trends in the analysis so far, most of which have been touched on already, in preparation for the secondary sources to be used in the next section. At this stage, questions of propinquity, in the terms previously discussed, will begin to come to the surface. So far I have been careful to use relatively neutral regional terms, but at this stage ethnic and hegemonic terminological constructs will begin to be addressed. The detailed linking in of such constructs must await, however, the last chapter when all the threads can be drawn together.

Although selective, this chapter has given a wealth of detail about the variability of footwear in Mid-Medieval Northern Europe. In itself, this demonstrates clearly the inadequacies of the dismissal of these items of body wear as utilitarian and archeologically unrevealing. More importantly, the emphasis on diversity and rates of change within and between assemblages has revealed dynamics that need careful consideration. Although the main interpretative insights must await Chapter 9, i.e. after secondary sources and iconographic images have been considered, certain important aspects can be highlighted and questions asked. Use of the model offered in Chapter 4 Fig 4.2 reveals some interesting patterns. These must be treated with care, of course, as the research design means that the collection of 'data' and the conceptual model are intimately linked.

Firstly, though, to what extent do the relationships between visibility and variability patterns hold up? Is it fair to see the low visibility features as being associated with deep vernacular style and high visibility with assertive and/or emblematic patterns? If not, is this because of inappropriate identification of certain aspects of footwear variation as of low or high visibility?

Low visibility was seen as appropriate to cut and heel form. Sole shape could also be included here, provided toe shape was excluded, i.e. only dimensions 2-8 used. Stitching material is another element of low visibility. A link was postulated between such aspects of footwear design and a tendency for decisions about these to be automatic and unconscious, therefore enduring and resistant to change. I

would suggest that for 200 years (10th -11th centuries) this was indeed the case for all of the primary assemblages. The tapered symmetrical sole, the highly structured and clear cut alternatives for heel form (round backed or Back Pointed), the separate sole and wrap around one piece upper are common throughout, with the notable exception of the AOPs. This is not the case, however, in the 9th century when diversity was greater, and in the more easterly assemblages the earlier ways (vamp-seams, wedge toes, single piece shoes) survived as a minority style. Neither is it true in the 12th century for some places e.g. Bergen and Duisburg though elsewhere e.g. London, the 'vernacular style' is more resistant to change. Stitching material, whilst regionally varied, does show remarkable continuity.

Medium visibility aspects are more complex. It was suggested that these, visible really only in face to face contact, were more related to interpersonal identification strategies- one would expect more intrasite than intersite variation with these. This has indeed been the case for fastening types. These show enormous variation in most assemblages, but more in western assemblages than eastern ones. It is quite possible that some of the variability could be explained in functional terms - indoor/outdoor shoes, for example or a need for the shoes of the very young to be more securely fastened than those of older individuals but this would not account for the diversity in, for example, size, shape and number of latches. In several sites, unique and innovatory fastening methods were observed: indeed this is the only aspect of the variability to display inventiveness in these phases. The standardised 'York slipper' then becomes even more noteworthy, for with these shoes performance of individuality through footwear was completely negated. Another interesting side point here is that the use of 'fastening types' to create 'typologies' is entirely futile if this aspect was the main vehicle in this context for the performativity of individual difference.

With the other 'medium visibility' characteristic, vamp decoration, though, the patterning was much more like the low visibility aspects, at least until the late 11th century. The vamp stripe, like the Back Point, was ubiquitous, though of varying frequency of occurrence within the assemblages. It was not possible to associate this feature with any particular structured grouping – its link with high

quality is circular as presence/absence of this feature was part of the quality assessment process. It is worth making a special point, however, of watching for the vamp stripe in iconographic representation of the time. By the 12th century, however, the remarkable diversity of decoration in Bergen and the incidence (though rare) of openwork patterning do suggest a more active role for vamp stripe decoration. The fact that at this stage this decorative device becomes much more elaborated suggests that it has been lifted from the taken for granted vernacular where it is signifying (perhaps) status shoes into a more active role, either assertive (interpersonal differentiating/ emulating) or emblematic (signifying a categoric identification). More on this in Chapter 9.

The situation with the high visibility aspects, identified as toe shape and coverage, is intriguing. As with the other 'vernacular' features, toe shape during the 10th -11th century varies more within than between assemblages. There is a relationship to size of shoe, and therefore to age and sex, but except in the case of infant's shoes this is not an absolute. In the 9th century, however, there is more regional contrast and in the 12th century the diversity of toe shape increases dramatically. There are some striking regional patterns here, but these must await support or otherwise from the secondary and representational sources. With coverage, the most striking patterning involves the contrasts between east and west in the popularity of the low cut shoe. These are not found in easterly sites until the 12th century, but are very common in London, Dublin and York in the 10th -early 11th centuries. With high coverage ('boots'), patterns are not so clear with intra-site variation more marked than intersite, and this needs careful following through in the next two chapters.

One interesting preliminary conclusion from this is that, contrary to the beliefs of Hald and Mould, there is no evidence so far of emblematic 'Scandinavian' footwear traits in other parts of NW Europe. Indeed on primary evidence, apart from a few early signs of North Sea coast 'vernacular' styles in the earliest stages of Dublin, the people of 10th century Dublin and York seemed to be identifying more with the people of London and Winchester than they were with those from Hedeby. The people of 11th -12th century Borgund, just about as 'Scandinavian' as you can get geographically, show a fascinating variety of choices about who to

emulate in terms of what they wore on their feet – all the more interesting if it is accepted that the Borgund shoes represent mostly a female-child population. Further interpretation, however, needs to await the analysis of secondary sources and contemporary representations.

Chapter 7

The findings from Secondary Sources

Introduction: Extending the Context

This chapter will incorporate the secondary information on variation in footwear, as outlined in chapter 2. As was made clear in that chapter, the published information represents, in most cases, a highly selective 'sample' where items considered to be of special interest, e.g. illustrative of an idiosyncratic typology, are chosen from published drawings and photographs. All published reports refer to numerous 'other fragments' not described in the report. The detail given, in both illustration and text, is very variable - some authors do not mention material used in securing uppers to soles, for example, and it is difficult to tell whether the lack of finishing stitch in a drawing means absence or simply that it was not considered important enough to draw. Nevertheless, the published information for the prioritised variables is quite comprehensive and, with care, can be used to amplify, check and extend.

The approach used follows the same pattern as in the last chapter. Thus to begin with the range of assemblages is outlined and briefly discussed. For these, the term 'sample' would be misleadingly precise. For the research domain itself, the questions of range of variability, chronological change and relationship of variability to foot size are considered, and any new eventualities pursued. Spatial relationships are then examined, to see to what extent the patterns, which seemed to be emerging at the end of the last chapter are confirmed. A small number of very interesting earlier (7th -8th century) assemblages are then examined in relation to the main research domain and finally variation in contemporary footwear from sites to the east and south of the research area are covered.

Given the limitations of the secondary sources, the use of the more advanced statistical methods would be inappropriate in this chapter, even where there are relatively large numbers of items (e.g. from Oslo). In an effort to avoid a fragmentary approach, the account in this chapter will be explicitly built upon the trends noted with the primary sources.

To avoid multiple referencing, the main reference will be given at the earliest convenient mention of the site, but only thereafter if a page reference is required.

a) The assemblages

36 further sites have published footwear relevant to this project. Three of these already feature on the primary list i.e. York, Bergen and Schleswig. The York shoes (52 items) come from sites other than Coppergate, which provided all of the material for the primary research. The Bergen material has been included for the reasons discussed earlier. Overall, this then gives coverage of 52 sites, most of which are shown in Figure 2.1. Of these, 4 are dated to the earlier period (Sutton Hoo, Iona, Chelles and Moutiers-Grand Val), with the others falling within the research time span. Six of the secondary sites are contemporary with the primary sites but lie to the east, mainly along the Baltic coast. (Wolin, Stettin, Gniew, Gdansk, Novgorod, Staraya Ladoga). 2 sites (Basel, Paladru) are likewise contemporary but lie to the south of the research area. This gives an almost complete coverage of footwear within the research domain in terms of footwear survival sites and also extends the domain in recognition of the artificiality of the research boundaries.

In all cases, only illustrated material is used. This gives a total secondary source list of 467 items. Although for most sites the number of items is modest, in several cases (notably Oslo with 85, Lund with 28, Basel with 25 and Paladru with 23) the sites are reasonably well represented. Because, on the whole, only the more complete shoes are used for illustration, a single table (rather than a set of relational tables) was used to record the main variables in the database.

As with the primary sources, dating is taken as given in the published texts. The reliability of this is as variable as with the primary sources and in at least one case (Oslo) the footwear variability was consciously used as a seriation dating mechanism, along with dendro, coins and other typological information (Schia 1977, 1987). Although with some sites the dating uses modern techniques and is clearly argued in the texts, e.g. for Iona in Barber 1981, Ribe in Bencard 1981, Paladru in Colardelle & Verdel 1993, in other texts the dating lacks published justification: this is especially true of the Baltic and Russian sites. The supplementary York footwear comes mainly from sites only dated in the broadest terms to Mid-Medieval. (Stead 1956, Richardson 1959, Macgregor 1982, Tweddle 1986) Although for analytical convenience, the various assemblages have been fitted into the chronological frameworks used in the last chapter, any interpretation must take these limitations into account.

Table 7.1 below sets out the comparable assemblages using the chronological 'phases' numbers set out in Fig 5.2. Assemblages marked with an asterisk are located within the research domain (infill). Others lie outside on chronological and/or spatial grounds.

One final benefit from these secondary sources relates to the excavational contexts of the materials. Although many of the sites are similar to those used for the primary material i.e. early urban areas (e.g. Oslo (Schia 1977, 1987), Lubeck (Groenman-van Waateringe 1988a), Novgorod (in Hald 1972) or beach markets e.g. Ribe, Wolin (Wiklak 1995), some of the others are different. Thus Iona and Middelburg (Hendriks 1964) are monastic sites, with Iona convincingly associated with the Columban abbey. The footwear of Chelles and Moutiers Grand Val (Laporte 1988) consists of well provenanced holy relics, which have been preserved in church treasuries from this period.

Table 7.1 Secondary assemblages, by chronological phase.

| | Primary | Secondary |
|-------|--|--|
| Early | Oxford | Chelles Teil Sutton Hoo Moutiers Staraya Ladoga Iona Drenthe |
| P11 | Oxford Elisenhof IRBs? | Ribe* Wolin Oseberg* Ballinderry Crannog* Lagore Crannog* Duurstede* Staraya Ladoga |
| P12/1 | Hedeby Winchester London Rouen York (CG) Bruges Dublin Durham Gloucester | Wolin Novgorod Deventer* Teil* Middelburg* St Denis* |
| P2 | London Winchester York (CG) Durham Dublin Rouen | St Denis* Faeroes* Stettin |
| P3/4 | London Durham York (CG) Duisburg Rouen Borgund Winchester Norwich | Lund* Oslo* Paladru Gdansk Basel Lubeck* Schleswig* Haus Meer* Bergen* York (Other)* Vlaardingen* Stettin |
| P5/6 | London Duisburg Rouen Bergen Winchester Durham Lynn Schleswig Norwich | Lund* Oslo* Lochem* Bergen* |

With Sutton Hoo (East 1983) and Oseberg (Blindheim 1959), the footwear is part of high status dressed burials. Ballinderry Crannog (O'Neill Hencken 1942), Lagore Crannog (O'Neill Hencken 1950), Haus Meer (Janssen & Janssen 1999, Reichmann 1998) and Paladru are all relatively remote, small scale, inland settlements. These new kinds of context, although not involving a great number of items, enrich the analysis in important ways, as will be seen by the end of this chapter.

b) The parameters of style in the research domain – anything new?

Within the research domain, the secondary sources contribute very little novelty with nearly all of the items fitting easily into the range outlined in the last chapter. The exceptions, however, are most interesting.

In the earlier phase (9th century) the small collection from Middelburg does show some unfamiliar features (Hendriks 1964: 113-4), the most striking of which is a high extension at the back of one shoe, with cut away sides: only the Iona footwear (dated 150+ years earlier) has a similar profile (see Figure 7.1). This characteristic will become especially significant in the next chapter where the iconography of contemporary manuscript illustrations will be considered.

From the later phases, the only 'new' feature is an example of silver vamp embroidery from Schleswig, dated to the 11th century (Goubitz 2001:52). Not only the use of silver is unfamiliar, but also the pattern of the embroidery is entirely novel for the research domain. The primary material for Schleswig did not reveal any such feature, and Schnack's 1992 account of Schleswig shoe finds has been unobtainable, but it does seem that this foliate decorative form is very similar to that shown on a number of Baltic shoes (see for example, Wiklak 1995:80, Goubitz 2001:52) but not those from contemporary peninsular Scandinavia. This will be returned to later in this chapter when the Baltic connections are examined.

Montembault in her tantalisingly brief mention of the St Denis footwear mentions a group of six shoes, which are made of one piece with the 'main sewing following the centre line of the *sole*' (Montembault 1998 p 62-3, my italics: see the Chelles shoe in Fig 7.1a). Unfortunately, she gives neither a cutting outline nor a sole view: indeed, not even a date is given for this unusual cut as the St Denis shoes are said to be Carolingian to late Medieval (Montembault 1998: 62). The performative high visibility aspects, however, as evidenced from the photograph, are quite familiar. It should be made clear that the only St Denis shoes actually included in the secondary database are the few examples illustrated and dated in Goubitz' recent publication (Goubitz et al 2001).

Finally, a small number of very simple shoes have been found, of varying date (Ribe, Hoogeland, Drenthe, Duurstede, Danish bogs as well as Dublin and IRBs in the last chapter). These consist of large ovals of leather or rawhide, with thong threaded through hole around the edge to draw the leather around the foot. Sometimes these are seamed with thong at the heel and along the short vamp (see Figure 7.2). Hald discusses such footwear at length in *Primitive Shoes*, relating it to the 'rivlins' of the highlands of Scotland and other relatively modern 'survivals' of what she considers to be an archaic form, dating back at least to the Bronze Age (Hald 1972:165-7). Groenman-van Waateringe gives a good account of these in the prehistory section of Goubitz' 2001 book (pp 383-394). These are the only shoes which do seem to contradict the assumptions made at the end of Chapter 3 regarding professional shoe making. Although too marginal to the assemblages and problematic in dating to justify detailed discussion, their importance for this project is to sharpen up the contrast between domestic and skilled craft production.

New features in prior or adjacent assemblages will be dealt with later in the extended context part of this chapter.

Image removed due to third party copyright

- a) Lone sole from Chelles, near Paris. Curated relic of Saint Batilde.
Probably 7th century. Laporte 1988 p 103, 108

Image removed due to third party copyright

- b) Shoe from Abbey of Middelburg, probably 8th century.
Hendriks 1964:112-3.

Image removed due to third party copyright

- c) Two shoes from Iona. Probably late 6th-early 7th century.
Groenman-van Waateringe 1981: 324-5

Figure 7.1 Church footwear?

Image removed due to third party copyright

a) Lucas' 'Type 4', a rawhide shoe
from Ballyhagen, Co. Kildare.
10 examples in the National
Museum, Dublin.
Tentatively dated by Lucas to
the 16th century.
Lucas 1956: 381

Image removed due to third party copyright

b) Offered in Goubitz 2001: 94 as
an example of a 'primitive shoe'.
Dated to 1000 BC, from North
West Europe.
Almost identical to a and c

Image removed due to third party copyright

c) 'Primitive shoe' found in a well
at Hoogeland, Neths.
Dated to the 12th century.
Goubitz 2001: 28

Image removed due to third party copyright

d) One-piece shoe from Ribe.
Dated to the 8th century.
Neilson 1983: 92

Figure 7. 2 Home-made shoes?

c) Change over time in the research domain – anything new?

Overall, there are no surprises here, in terms of earliest occurrence or latest survival, and the overall pattern fits remarkably well with the generalisations made in the last chapter. There are, however, interesting regional contrasts in frequencies and take-up, which will be dealt with shortly.

d) The relationship of footwear variability, physiological age and sex – anything new?

Testing these relationships is difficult with the secondary sources. Some published sources do not give scales for drawings and photographs and with others the filtration of the information through publication procedures means that reliability is further compromised. Only 48 items permitted any kind of measurement of shoe length. As wear patterns were rarely shown, foot length had to be estimated using toe shape, as for the upper estimates in the last chapter. Furthermore, there were no measurable items below Footlencat 3, i.e no children’s shoes, so this aspect of the variability cannot be tested. The following comments are very tentative.

In the last chapter, an association was found between vamp decoration and the larger adult sizes. This is supported by the secondary sources, as shown in the table below:

Table 7.2: Foot length and presence of vamp decoration

| Footlencat | vamp dec | No vamp dec |
|------------|----------|-------------|
| 3 | 0 | 2 |
| 4 | 1 | 11 |
| 5 | 5 | 6 |
| 6 | 0 | 1 |

A similar tentative confirmation is made for the greater diversity of toe types with the larger adult sizes. Coverage and fastening types likewise follow the patterns observed in the last chapter, in that there does not appear to be any relationship overall to foot length. Overall, the greater performativity of male shoes, in terms of vamp decoration and toe shape, does seem to be supported.

The association of the Back Pointed heel with small adult (female) sizes was one of the most striking features of this section in the last chapter. The secondary sources are not very useful for testing this, mainly because for the 10th and 11th centuries so few measurable shoes are available. The small number available is further complicated by the presence of some assemblages in which the Back Point does not feature at all, notably Paladru and Haus Meer: this will be dealt with in the next section of this chapter. A summary table, given below, does however broadly support the association which, given the constraints, is very suggestive and certainly does not contradict the earlier findings.

Table 7.3: Foot length and heel type

| Footlencat | Back Point | Round Back |
|------------|------------|------------|
| 3 | 2 | 4 |
| 4 | 7 | 11 |
| 5 | 4 | 17 |
| 6 | 0 | 1 |

e) Spatial patterning in the research domain

The aim of this project is to trace embodied identification strategies and in this section spatial patterns observed in a limited number of primary sources can be checked out. It has been made clear already that the field of variation is known. Now it is time to look at patterns. As in the last chapter, a narrative chronological sequence will be followed.

i) 9th century

The contrast between early 9th century Oxford and Elisenhof was very strong. Additional information both confirms and complicates this east-west contrast. As at Elisenhof, the cut of the elegant, vamp-seamed shoe varies from one-piece to three or four pieces and the appearance is standardised as is the decorative stitching style of the flat vamp seam (see Fig 6.13). One of the pairs of shoes in the Oseberg burial is this style, and it is common in Duurstede (Groenman-van Waateringe 1976). Two examples come from Ribe. (Nielson 1981) Perhaps more surprisingly, vamp seamed shoes from these phases are found in Ireland (Figure 7.3).

Image removed due to third party copyright

Figure 7.3 Vamp-seamed shoe from Ballymacomb, C. Kerry

Lucas 1956: 372

This latter deserves some closer attention. The IRB assemblage had a number of excellently preserved and made shoes of this style, Lucas' 'types' 3 and 4. He labels Type 4 as a 'pampootie' after shoes made in the Aran Islands up until the last century. These Irish shoes differ from the mainland vamp seamed shoes in that the vamp seam is sewn edge to edge and puckered, rather than overlapping and flat. The main problem with the IRBs is the lack of dating but more securely dated excavations at Ballinderry and Lagore Crannogs have produced identical

footwear dated to the 8th -9th centuries through stratigraphy and metal artefact typologies. The vamp-seamed shoes from early Dublin are, on the other hand, identical to the Elisenhof vamp-seamed shoes, as is a single York example (Tweddle 1986:252): I would suggest that these latter are derived from mainland Europe rather than developed from the 'native shoes'. This will be worked through more comprehensively in the last chapter of this thesis.

Even more interesting is further confirmation of absence of this style from mainland Britain (other than the single York example). This must admittedly be seen in context. The London assemblage, by far the largest, represents footwear dated provisionally from AD900 onwards and has no footwear from mid-Saxon (7th -9th century) Lundenwic. York, Winchester, Gloucester do however, have footwear from the later 9th and all of this, with the single exception mentioned above, is of the side-seamed one-piece-upper variety. The Oxford (late 8th -mid 9th) situation has already been described and the 4 shoes from Sutton Hoo, dated to the early 7th century, are of the side-seamed type. Some clear regionalisation seems to be observable here. Jumping ahead briefly, the vamp-seamed style lingers on longest in the eastern sites, although as a minority taste, with some isolated examples from Lund (late 11th) (Cinthio 1963: 185) and Oslo (early 12th) (Schia 1977:149) as well as Schleswig. It is highly improbable that these are 9th century residuals or curated artefacts, and this survival will be returned to in the last chapter.

In Elisenhof and Hedeby, the vamp-seamed style was often combined with a folding up of the toe of the sole to produce a wedge effect (toe type 8). This distinctive feature was present in Duurstede (5 examples) and the diagram showing shoe making in the popular guide to archaeology of Ribe (Jenson 1991:28) shows just such a shoe being made. If found at Ribe (and the published shoe descriptions do not show it) this gives a localised North Sea coast distribution for this feature – it is not found in the Oseberg burial. It will, of course, be necessary to check for this toe type along the Baltic coast.

Vamp seamed shoes are always fastened to the foot by drawstrings, often in a very standardised way as at Elisenhof. The same is often true of the side-seamed

style, although at this stage at least there seems to be less standardisation (though this will change by the 11th century) in terms of numbers and locations of slits and width of drawstring. Only the side-seamed construction, however, is associated with the development of the latchet fastening method. The earliest example known of this is from Oxford (early 9th). The secondary sources also reveal 9th century latchets at St Denis (Goubitz 2001:149), Teil (Neths) (Goubitz 2001:150) and Deventer (Neths) (Goubitz 2001:149). These are all western sites: indeed, it is worth mentioning here that the secondary sources gave only a single example of a latchet fastening from any of the easterly sites (Lund: Cinthio 1976: 313). Lund and Hedeby are the ONLY eastern sites with examples, and these are very unusual even there. (More on this later)

The secondary sources confirm the decreasing popularity of the one piece cut. The former occurs occasionally in many places, but reaches greatest popularity in two different contexts, central Ireland and southern Jutland. The famous 'Type Ones' of Lucas have already been discussed, with their unique moccasin-style vamp seams: Lucas dates these on the basis of decorative motifs to 'early Christian' i.e 6th-8th centuries. Lucas also mentions the Ballinderry Crannog shoes, which are very definitely the same style. These remarkably elaborate cuts are not the same sort of thing as the one pieces of Elisenhof, Ribe or Duurstede and are best considered later in this chapter in relation to the pre-9th footwear from Iona, Chelles etc. By the 10th century, one-piece cuts have almost disappeared (with the notable exception of the AOPs in London), and the composite shoe has become standard, as is the case with the primary assemblages.

Finally, the secondary sources confirm the rarity of the Back Pointed sole during the 9th century. Out of 34 assessable items, 28 were round backed. Three of the six Back Pointed soles came from the Oseberg burial (early 9th) and only 1/8 Duurstede and 1/6 Ribe shoes exhibited this feature: it is still a minority style.

ii) 10th Century

The primary sample for the 10th century was quite large. Unfortunately, the main geographical gap, i.e. Scandinavia apart from Hedeby, has not been filled in any way, although the 11th century will be more profitable. Historically well-documented 'Viking-age' Ribe has yet to be discovered archaeologically. (Bencard 1981:3) Taphonomic conditions at Kaupang and at Birka were not right for the survival of leather and the oldest footwear deposits from Oslo, Lund, Bergen, Stockholm, Trondheim and Svendborg are 11th century at the earliest. Most of the 10th century secondary assemblage is made up of the supplementary York material, with a scatter of one-off examples from elsewhere.

This York material has proved interesting and has confirmed still further the close links between York and London. The mania for low cut shoes and the 'slipper' style does seem, however, to have been a Coppergate phenomenon, and the other York sites show a proportion of medium-height shoes and latchet-toggle fastenings which are very similar to 10th -early 11th century London. The 'slipper' remains restricted to Dublin-London-York, except for a 3-piece version found in Lottorf Mose near Hedeby (Hald 1972:86) and identical to the single similar example from Hedeby itself. A similar form, but with a drawstring threaded around the opening, from the Faeroes is provisionally dated to the 10th century (Dahl 1951:96) but is very like a 9th century example from Ribe. The difference in degree of decoration between York and London footwear is, however, confirmed, with the 10th century York shoes showing very little decoration compared with a high level in London.

Although there is some overlap between York and Hedeby, there is only one example of the multiple slits fastening which is becoming popular in 10th century Hedeby, one of the vamp-seamed shoes and none of the wedge toes. On the other hand, the latchet fastening (see above) is showing some regional contrasts in that in both York and Hedeby (but not in Dublin, London, or Bruges) a pointed latchet version is found. This includes the well-known example from Hedeby, featured in publications, of a low boot, which also displays, uniquely for the

Hedeby sample, a needlepoint toe. There are no experimental toe types from the York primary or secondary assemblage samples.

55% of the York supplementary shoes have Back Points, but the other items are too scattered to be useful in this respect.

iii) 11th century

The secondary sources are particularly useful here, given the relative shortage of 11th century primary sources. Oslo, Lund, Haus Meer and Lubeck offer reasonable numbers and there are some interesting assemblages from the extension areas (Paladru, Basel, Gdansk, Wolin, Stettin), which will be incorporated into the next section.

The mid-late 11th century was identified in the last chapter as a period of change, which then accelerated in the 12th century. Is this confirmed by the secondary sources?

In fact, within the research domain, there is very little sign of revolutionary change by the end of the 11th century. The multiple slits fastening variation has become very popular and has spread westwards from its earliest occurrences in the eastern sites. Its level of incidence in Lund, Oslo and Lubeck is very similar to that of London, York and Dublin. Low cut footwear has become unusual everywhere and the ankle-hugging shoe are standard. Toes are rather more pointed than they have been in the previous phases but experimental shapes are very rare, with a single slightly nipple-shaped toe in Oslo (Schia 1987:342) and in Haus Meer (Janssen & Janssen 1999: tafel 46), and the gently rounded toe continues to be used everywhere. Shoes are more likely to be decorated, but the style of decoration is a quality version of the traditional vamp stripe (with examples of the slit-restitch stripe from Oslo and Lund) rather than anything new. The Back Point is universal at around 50% in the research area.

Although it is hard to be confident in a situation of so many variables, I think it is fair to say that, for the research domain, this is the time of greatest conformity.

Contrasts apparent in the 9th / 10th century have disappeared and styles have merged so that the footwear of, say, Lubeck and London or Haus Meer and Rouen are virtually interchangeable. This is all the more worth noting because elsewhere at the same time considerable diversification is taking place and by the 12th century, this has become widespread across North West Europe so that the footwear of, say, 12th century London and Bergen, come from different worlds.

iv) 12th century

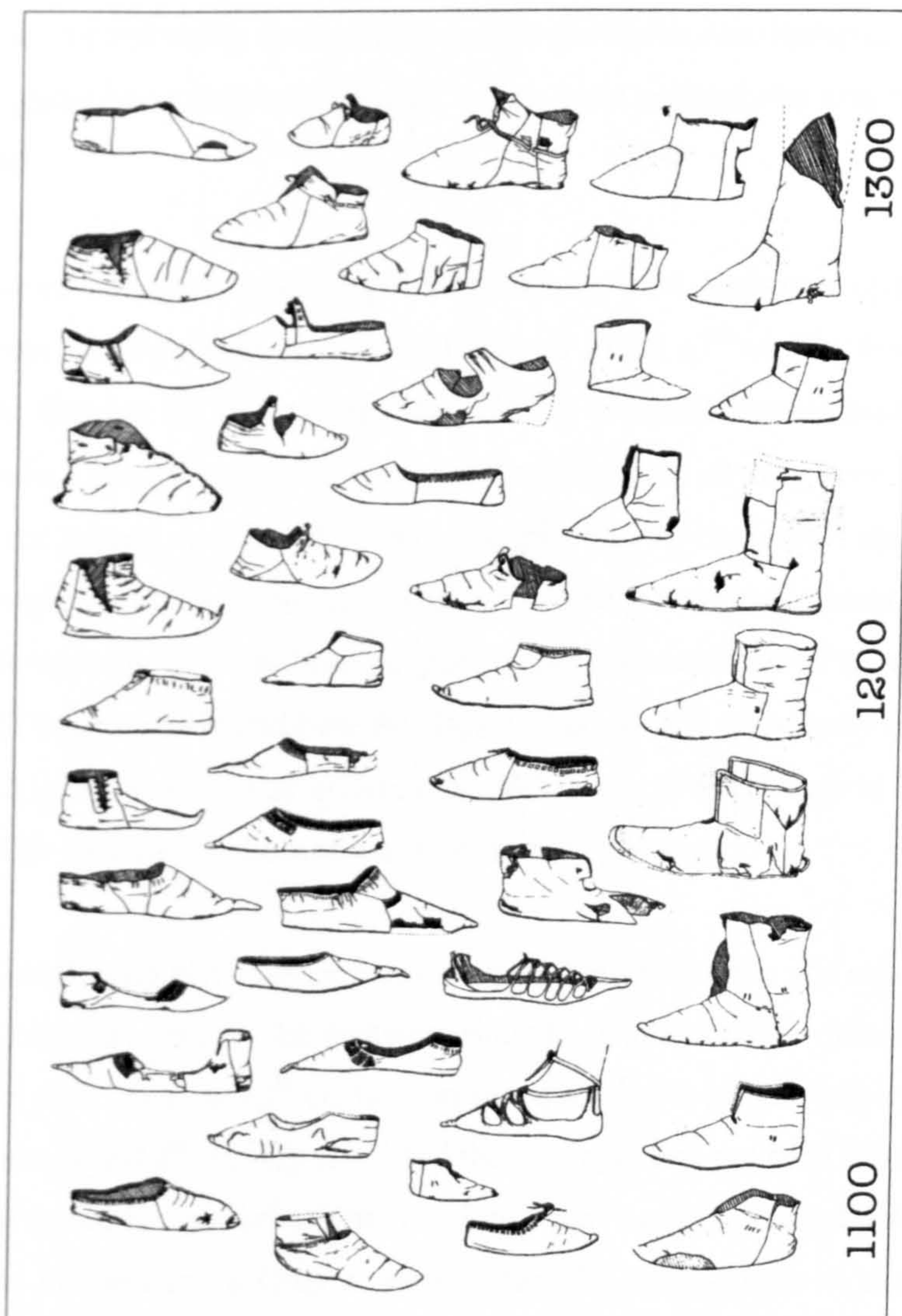
In the last chapter, the 12th century was being seen as a time of great diversity, especially in the middle and early part. In some places, such as London, the old styles were being richly elaborated with a rumbling minority fashion involving experimental toe shapes and crude openwork decoration. Elsewhere, the 11th century styles seemed to disappear almost entirely, especially in Bergen, with new toe shapes, decorative styles and fastening types. The Bergen primary sample was, however, heavily biased, and at this point use of the more comprehensive survey carried out by Larsen becomes essential (Larsen 1992). In the publication, footwear was not presented as individual items but as summarised information. Only the earliest phases used by Larsen (pre-AD1107 and AD1170-1198) are relevant.

It is clear that the more traditional shapes of drawstring fastened shoes with gently pointed or rounded symmetrical points did actually continue into the 12th century at Bergen, but by the later part of the century they are being steadily replaced by side laced and strap shoes. What Larsen calls the skew toe (Larsen 1992: 29) is increasingly present throughout the 12th century with a complex relationship with low and high shoes, old and new styles. The extraordinary embroidered decoration is confirmed to be a 12th century phenomenon, disappearing by the mid 13th century and not replaced by any other form of decoration. Single vamp stripes did, however, persist until the end of the 12th century as a common type. Larsen does not say what proportions of shoes within a phase were decorated/ undecorated. Larsen mentions some examples of Back Pointed soles (Larsen 1992: 19, 30) but these receive no further attention.

The 12th century Oslo assemblage shows a similar range of extravagant and (for NW Europe) highly innovative styles. The extraordinary diversity of the assemblage is perhaps best summed up by Schia's table, reproduced as Figure 7.4. The 11th and 13th century section has been included to demonstrate the relatively rich diversity of the 12th -early 13th centuries. The Bergen decorative style can be seen in some examples (at least 5 in the actual listings) and the elongated 'skew toe' is also present.

Figure 7.4 Footwear variation in medieval Oslo

Note the contrast between the 12th (very diverse) and 13th (more mundane and homogenous) century footwear.



What is perhaps most striking compared with the rest of NW Europe at this time is the number of low cut shoes at a time when the low cut shoe had disappeared elsewhere and, indeed, at a time when elsewhere the mid-calf boot was becoming popular. The marked slope downwards to the heel is also unusual, though not unknown in London. The dates given by Schia for some of the decorated shoes are slightly earlier (around AD1100) than for the Bergen decorated footwear. The Back Point does not seem to last into the 12th century. Lund and Lubeck, on the other hand, neither place very distant from Oslo, do not show this efflorescence of style. Indeed, the footwear, dated late 11th -12th century from these sites is very like that of Borgund and Schleswig, in that with the exception of a few examples of crude openwork (Lund: Cinthio 1963: 311, Borgund: Larsen 1970:Plate II) these shoes are very much part of the later 11th century conformity noted in the last section, a conformity that extends across the North Sea. Something quite special is going on in Oslo and Bergen, which must certainly be returned to in the last chapter.

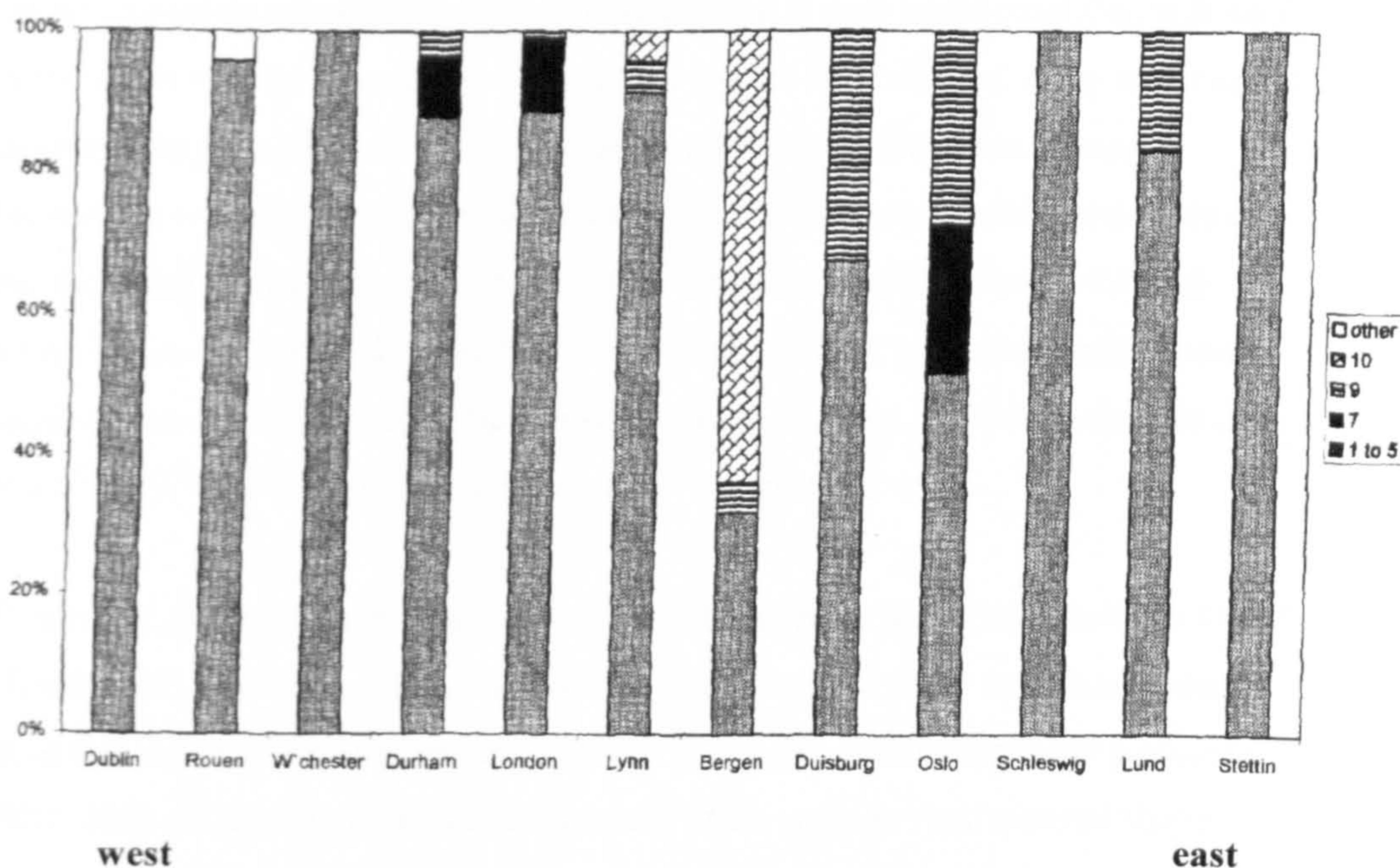
The appearance of openwork designs is interesting here. Elaborate openwork patterns become popular in high-status footwear in the 13th century (see for example in Grew & De Neergaard 1988: 19) but in the 12th are unusual and very idiosyncratic. Examples from London and Durham have already been mentioned and these are indeed very like the Oslo examples shown on Schia's chart. The crude examples from Lund and Borgund are possibly homemade emulations of an Oslo based fashion. It has been suggested that openwork shoes were designed to show off brightly coloured hose and this will be further considered in the next chapter using representational information. What is interesting here is that this highly visible innovation did not catch on in most places.

The rest of mainland NW Europe is not well represented in the secondary archive. Although in theory the footwear finds from sites such as Dordrecht and Amsterdam start from the 12th century, in fact attention is almost wholly given to the abundant post-12th century finds and there simply has not been time to disentangle the earlier material. The St Denis archive remains unpublished and inaccessible to researchers. Only scattered examples are available to supplement the Duisburg and Rouen primary assemblages. These do fit with the Duisburg

evidence i.e. an increased popularity of the mid calf boots with multiple drawstring fastenings (Goubitz 2001, p142, p 59c & d). It has not been possible to search properly for the ‘nipple toe’/square heel sole so very dominant in Duisburg, and this must wait until the next chapter using the representations.

Figure 7.5 summarises some of the variety of footwear in 12th century NW Europe through an east-west plot of the experimental toe shapes. Although a typology was used to record the material, this typology has become increasingly inadequate in terms of the variety of shapes and forms – all they really have in common is that they involve extension of the toe of the shoe. Some are symmetrical and straight, some are twisted medially, some tweaked upwards. Some flow out from tapered ‘traditional’ soles, some from the waisted, swollen front-section soles. These toes will feature in the representations in the next chapter in quite specific contexts and provide a basis for the discussion of embodied identity strategies in the last chapter.

Figure 7.5 Proportions of 12th century toe types in locations representing a west to east transect across Northern Europe. Types 1-5 are the ‘ordinary’ symmetrical, gently rounded/ pointed toes. For others, see Fig. 6.8



f) Extending the context

i) The contribution of Early Medieval footwear

The lack of footwear from these phases has already been discussed. The small number of items available, however, are so important that mention of them has been unavoidable at times and this is the time to give them special attention, and examine their relationship with the footwear of the research domain.

The earliest of these are probably the four fragmentary shoes from the Sutton Hoo burial, dated to the early 7th century and thought to be that of a local potentate. (East 1983) These were excavated in 1939 and associated in the burial with other leather objects under the great silver dish. Because of inadequate conservation, these shoes are now deteriorated beyond recording. The original length is thought to be around 260 mm for all four shoes. These shoes are of an extremely familiar type for anyone concerned with Mid-Medieval footwear in Northern Europe, which is especially interesting given that many of the artefacts associated with this burial are considered to be exotic (Coptic, Byzantine, Irish, with the famous helmet showing signs of Roman and Swedish influence). These are classic separate sole turnshoes with symmetrical tapered soles. The remains are not complete enough to locate side seams but it does seem clear that at least 2 of the shoes did not have vamp seams. One has an embroidered vamp stripe and 2 pairs of slits for a drawstring. Earlier interpretations of the shoes as buckle fastening have since been rejected (East 1983: 790). Unfortunately, the heels of the shoes are not fully preserved. although the reconstruction shows them as round-backed. The stitching is fine and the material not preserved, which could imply the use of thread rather than leather thong. In short, if these shoes came up in a 9th - 12th century context they would fit in perfectly.

This is not, however, true of the other early shoes, from Iona (35), Chelles (3) and Moutiers (2). The Iona shoes, dated to the mid 7th century and excavated from what is thought to be a vallum ditch of the 7th century Columban Abbey (Barber 1981: 320) do seem to be turnshoes and are of the symmetrical tapered shape which is overwhelmingly dominant up to the 12th century. In other ways,

however, the shoes are unfamiliar. Several heel areas and some associated fragments show a long extension upwards at the rear, strengthened by a wrap around large piece of leather. The heel areas are decorated with criss-cross lines. The throat part of the vamp shows a variety of tabs (extensions) although these are undecorated. Perhaps the most novel aspect is on a shoe which has a curved seam across the vamp, although this may be the outcome of a misleading drawing. As already mentioned, the only shoe with this kind of back-projection in the 9th century is one from Middelburg, also associated with an abbey (see Figure 7.1).

The Chelles and Moutiers shoes are something else again. Dated speculatively to the 7th century, they have been curated in the treasuries of the abbeys of Chelles (near Paris) and Moutiers-Grand-Val (Jura) The shoes are low cut and have heavily engraved foliate decoration. Gold leaf and coloured vegetable dyes were used to highlight the designs. Like the Iona shoes, these have tabs at the throat. As is clear from Figure 7.1 the cut of these shoes is entirely unfamiliar. All the shoes are held to the foot with a combination of built in straps and attached strips. Laporte argues plausibly for these shoes as high-status liturgical sandals, probably Episcopal, using comparative examples and documentary evidence from Rome (Laporte 1988: 112-4). It will be interesting to see how these styles fit with those in the iconographies to be discussed in the next chapter.

Whereas the Sutton Hoo shoes are entirely within what is to become the mainstream footwear repertoire in NW Europe, these ecclesiastical shoes do seem to be constructed in a different milieu. Only 2 small groups of footwear bear a possible relationship. One group is, obviously, the Lucas 'Type 1s'. Stylistically, these are similar to the Chelles and Moutiers shoe, and have been likened to the Iona shoes (Barber 1981). The dating of these shoes is shaky, and it is quite possible that they belong in this earlier 7th – 8th century phase. In all cases, however, the cut is entirely different, and the Iona shoes have many features not found in the other shoes. Furthermore, the Ballinderry Type 1s are at present contextualised as coming from an island farmstead with no apparent links to ecclesiastical establishments.

The second group with possible links are the AOPs from London. The AOPs, almost certainly made by one person, have not been paralleled in any of the secondary sources, and remain enigmatic. Their resemblance in cut and some stylistic features to the Lucas' 'Type 1s' has already been touched upon, and is further illustrated in Figure 7.6.

**Figure 7.6 AOP reconstruction (top) compared with a Lucas 'Type 1'
'Type I' from Lucas 1956: 367**

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The Iona, Chelles and Moutiers shoes are no more helpful, except in that they all have projections over the instep with in-cutting on either side. Yet their very distinctiveness, their difference from the contemporary (for many 'mainstream' shoes were found in the same archaeological context, the lowest level of the driveway in re-settled London) does hint at an ecclesiastical, liturgical link of some kind - no other social group has been identified at this stage with such conspicuously 'different' footwear. Again, this awaits examination in the next chapter.

The sheer lack of evidence for the footwear of 'ordinary folk' from these phases makes further speculation unrealistic, but the repertoire suggested by the above will be indispensable in the next chapter, where the iconography was produced, at least up until the 11th century, almost entirely by individuals working in institutionalised Roman Christian establishments.

ii) The contribution of contemporary eastern footwear

The Polish and Russian sites are very rich in footwear from the research period. An article by Wiklak on Gniew alone in 1995 listed 17,806 fragments of leather, including 155 complete uppers and 407 soles. In 1995 he listed 12 footwear-producing sites in Pomerania and more recent excavations must have added to these figures. Russian sites such as Novgorod and Plotz have also produced huge quantities of leather. Originally, I had planned to include these sites as primary sources but early planning decisions made this untenable within the time limits of this project. Given the difficulties in obtaining publications and in translating from Polish and Russian, what follows is only the merest taste (based on 51 recorded items) of what must be complex and interesting assemblages.

The 9th century footwear from this region is very familiar. There are a number of examples of the one-piece 'pampootie' style simple shoe, drawn together at vamp and heel (Wolin, Gniew). There are also examples from all of the sites of the separate sole, vamp-seamed style already met in southern Jutland and along the North Sea coast (Wiklak 1995 in Wolin) and the wedge shaped toe seems also to have been used (Novgorod in Hald 1972: 140). The shoes are either slip ons or

drawstring fastened, and the Back Pointed sole is present in all assemblages of this period although it is impossible to estimate its frequency. Hald makes much of the resemblance of the Staraya Ladoga footwear (which may be as early as the 7th century) to that of Jutland, although I would see the vamp seamed ones with wedge toes (Hald 1972:133) as being more significantly similar than the separate soled boots illustrated on page 131. This resemblance, which she uses to argue the presence of a Swedish colony, will be returned to in the last chapter.

Footwear from the 10th -11th century period in the Baltic area is in most ways very like that of the sites further west. In Stettin, this resemblance continues throughout the research period – Stettin shows no difference whatsoever to Lubeck and Schleswig, on the evidence available (Leciejewicz 1972). In the records as shown for Gdansk, however, (Wiklak 1995) the 11th century sees a distinctive style emerging, which is not like anything westwards except perhaps that odd silver-embroidered Schleswig shoe. These high backed but low cut shoes are shown as richly patterned, although the nature of the patterning cannot be inferred from the drawings- some of it may be openwork (see Fig. 7.7). The profile is like some of the Oslo shoes, but the patterning is quite different from the geometries of Bergen and Oslo, and involves curves and swirls. Such decoration is not found at all at Gniew, which Wiklak interprets as meaning that Gniew was not a wealthy town. This style runs alongside, as is usual, the mainstream drawstring shoe with simple construction.

Novgorod, as represented in Hald 1972 from Izjumova's elusive original work, at this later stage is hard to fathom. There are late incidences of vamp seaming, Back Point and vamp stripe, implying that these remained in the shoemaker's repertoire until the 13th century, long after they had died out elsewhere. One of the problems here, though, is that Hald was looking for Swedish similarities, not for difference. Moreover, there have been queries in recent years over the dating of occupational finds from Novgorod (Orton, pers comm.).

In summary, then, the latchet fastening seems to be entirely absent, on the information available, and side lacings are very late in development. Although the wedge toe persists longer than in the Jutland area, there does not seem to be

any sign of the elongated experimental toes of the 12th century Western assemblages, and instead an elaborately decorated low cut shoe with curvilinear foliage type patterning becomes popular in the wealthier towns. What is needed here is some footwear from, for example, 11th -12th century Krakow and Dresden. Efforts to find such sources failed, and this must wait another day.

**Figure 7.7 A selection of ‘Baltic’ footwear from Gdansk.
From Wiklak 1993: 80**

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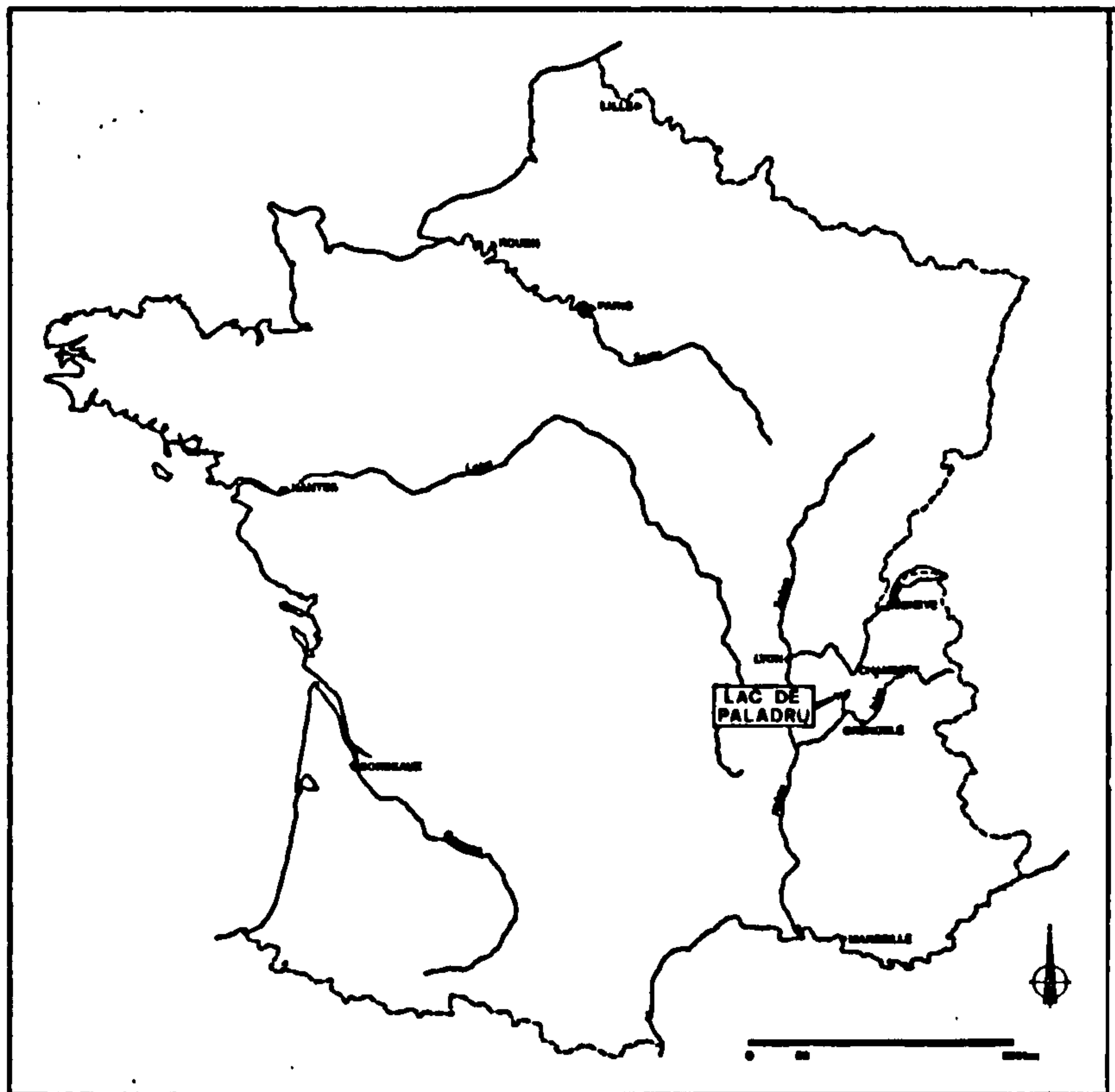
iii) The contribution of contemporary southern footwear.

Two secondary sources for contemporary footwear lie to the south of the research domain, Basel (Gansser Burckhardt 1940) and Paladru (Montembault 1993).

Basel has produced footwear, which is dated to the late 11th century and is in all ways classic NW European for its time, insofar as the rather primitive drawings convey. Separate sole, one-piece uppers, multi-slit fastenings dominate although there is one example of a 'pampootie' style vamp seamed one-piece. There is one calf boot with vertical drawstring, which is very like the 12th century Duisburg boots.

Paladru, though, is startlingly different and deserves careful attention. The excavations here took place from the 1970s and were conducted with exemplary attention to environmental evidence and wider contexts. The site consisted of the remains of a small village on the shores of Lake Paladru, founded at a time when lake levels were exceptionally low and abandoned some 40 years later when the lake level rose again. Since then, the lake water has ensured excellent survival of organic material, especially timber and leather. Most of the excavation was carried out using sub-aqua methods.

Through the use of multiple techniques, the dating for this settlement has been placed at around AD 1002 to 1040. This is probably the most reliable close dating of any footwear in this project. The village existed in a remote part of the French Alps, well away from major routes and, although detailed documentary evidence is lacking, probably was part of a large manorial set-up left over from the Carolingian era and about to collapse into the patchwork of local domains. Colardelle suggests that the abandonment of this village was followed very soon after by the setting up of a small, fortified castellerie nearby (Colardelle 1993: 361-367). The land in this area is poor and the winter climate severe, suitable mainly for pasturage and some cereal cropping. In short, this settlement is quite unlike the sea and river orientated growing towns of northern Europe. Figure 7.8 shows the location.

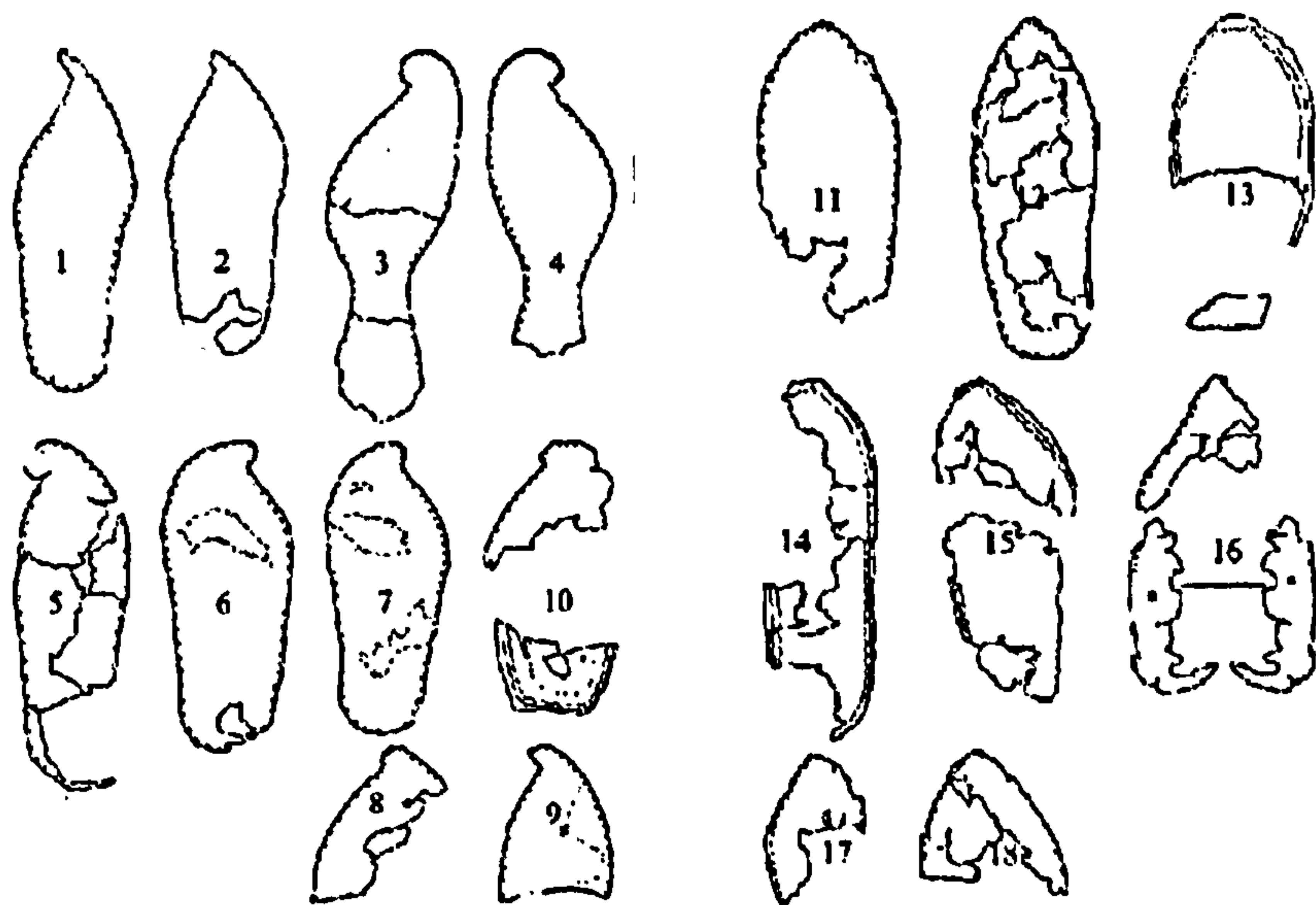
Figure 7.8 The location of Paladru

This tiny, remote and ephemeral settlement is important because the small footwear assemblage displays quite remarkable variation for the early 11th century. Although at first glance similar to the footwear of contemporary Northern Europe – these are all turnshoes made of leather with one-piece uppers and drawstring fastenings- the stylistic range is enormous. This is best illustrated by examination of the sole shapes in Figure 7.9.

These range from the familiar symmetrical gently pointed tapered shape (11, 14) to the hooked toes found occasionally in late 11th century northern Europe (1, 2) (e.g. Kings Lynn, Rouen, Duisburg) to strongly waisted asymmetrical shapes with extraordinary blob toes (3, 4) that I have not seen elsewhere. In northern Europe sole shapes as waisted as this are not found until the mid 12th /early 13th century. One of the soles (10) has a squared heel which is found commonly in late 12th century Duisburg. None of the shoes have Back Points, although there are many heel stiffeners (as in contemporary York). Although I have throughout

this project been mindful of dating compromises, the time gap here between innovatory styles in Paladru and in so many other north European sites cannot be argued away. This is a real puzzle.

Figure 7.9 Sole shapes from Paladru (all dated to AD 1002-1040)
Adapted from Montembault 1993: 269, 270



The problem here, of course, is lack of broader footwear context for the Paladru shoes despite considerable efforts. Comparisons made by the report author use, quite inappropriately in my view, north European assemblages such as Oslo, which barely existed in the early 11th century. Where are these styles coming from? These shoes, judging by the presence not only of offcuts but lasts and tools, were made locally. Why is a shoemaker in such an apparently insignificant settlement producing such sophisticated and varied shoes? There will be no easy answers to this, but at least the conformity of 11th century North West Europe is highlighted as an artificial construct rather than a kind of natural convergence.

Final Comments

This chapter has skimmed over the surface of a rich body of information, particularly in relation to the easterly sites. With the smaller assemblages, a reasonable coverage has been possible. On the whole, the secondary data has fitted very well with the primary findings, whilst enabling refinement of local contrasts and similarities. Although statistical analysis has not been appropriate, and there is the usual danger of finding only what one is seeking, I think that the points made are valid and well referenced.

As far as the material manifestation of footwear – and through it embodied identity- is concerned, the field is now laid out. I have been most careful in the last two chapters not to over-use ethnic terminology or to pre-empt historical analysis except in the broadest sense. This awaits the last chapter. Before this, however, one last area of ‘ideas’ and action needs to be explored, and that is the field of images.

Chapter 8

The contribution of representations

Introduction: The world of the image.

Images of the human body survive from the whole of the research period. The techniques and media used to create them are very varied - carving of wood, ivory and stone; painting onto vellum, parchment, cloth and walls; embroidering onto and weaving into draperies using silk, wool and linen; enamelling onto metal surfaces; mosaic composing onto walls and floors; engraving of metal surfaces. Indeed, every museum in Northern Europe displays iconographic images of the human form under the heading of 'Medieval Art'. The challenge in this chapter is to quarry this vast resource for insights into the use of footwear in the embodied performance of identity.

There are obvious difficulties with this. In the earlier chapters of this thesis, much attention was given to discourse about cultural construction of 'reality' and the slipperiness of beliefs in the 'truth'. With iconic images of the human body, such discussion is superfluous. No one expects such images to be 'realistic' portrayals of 'real' people and scenes but instead to be purposively designed to convey specific ideas and evoke specific emotions. Yet images do not come out of nowhere, but are, in Bourdieu's terms, generated out of the Habitus of the producer, a crystallisation of dispositions into an enduring form through a series of creative acts. Whilst being consciously modelled according to precepts explicitly arising from overt ideologies, some part of the created image will come from the taken-for-granted world of the creator. Even careful copies of pre-existing images show creative amendment, revealing differences in the lived worlds of the producers. Figure 8.1, for example, shows what is clearly the same composition but with important differences in the clothing and body language of the participants. These differences may be related to deeply embedded iconic

conventions i.e. what is 'right' for those biblical character in that context, in this case or to first hand experience of the material world (what is 'right' for the actual painter or the people he/she sees around in similar contexts). Most probably there is a recursive relationship between image and reality, and this shows the complexity of this area.

Figure 8.1 12th and 13th Century narrative portrayals of 'Ruth in the Cornfield'
From Dodwell 1954, Plate 51

Image removed due to third party copyright

Is examination of this relationship too ambitious a project for this thesis? Certainly, only a superficial exploration is possible. Yet such an attempt is essential. Iconographic representation gives the only way in which the footwear can be contextualised, not only into the body itself – how footwear combines with other aspects of body wear – but also into social context. Many representations, like the 'Ruth in the cornfield' ones in Fig 8.1, portray events crammed with bodies-in-action, interacting at a frozen moment. Although biblical events are by far the commonest to be portrayed, these are often set performatively in what were modern contexts. Furthermore, a proportion of the church-produced representations do actually depict contemporary events e.g. coronations, presentations of gifts: the most famous such representation is the

narration of the Norman invasion of England on the late 11th century Bayeux Tapestry. It seems, on the basis of archaeological and documentary evidence, reasonable to suppose that these latter portrayals are consciously and conspicuously closer to ‘real people and events’ than the explicitly biblical. The same arguments apply to mythical event representation from the non-Christian areas. By the 12th century, secular craftsmen in the fast-expanding cities such as Liege in Flanders were using human forms interacting in secular contexts to decorate household objects. Although these are no less iconographic than the monastic images, the new imagery is in itself fascinating: maidens dancing by the light of the moon, to quote Fitzstephen's contemporary account of the joys of living in late 12th century London (Stow 1956: 508).

This chapter will begin with a brief evaluation of the ways in which the images of the human body from the research domain have been interpreted. This will cover contributions from art historians, medievalists and historians as well as archaeologists. A reasonably systematic approach, which meets the aims of this project, will then be outlined. The images of footwear will then be compared with the archaeological footwear contemporary with the production of the image, with particular attention to contextual insights in relation to differences related to gender, age, class and ethnicity. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the main observations. References given for representations are for the source used, from which detailed catalogue references can be obtained if desired (see Appendix 3).

a) Evaluation.

Finding volumes containing high-quality reproductions of hundreds of medieval manuscript illuminations is not difficult, e.g. Durliat's *L'Art Roman* (1982), Brown's *Anglo Saxon Manuscripts* (1991), Pacht's *Book Illuminations in the Middle Ages* (1986). These are usually classified into the Art section of libraries, with many shelved in Palaeographics. The commentaries in these volumes are part of a discourse which deals with entities such as the ‘Winchester School’ and the authors are concerned to trace ‘influences’: in her commentary on

Iconography in the Book of Kells (Henry 1974: 149-222), Henry mentions Coptic, Byzantine, Oriental, Italian and Carolingian ‘influences’ on Insular Art. Style is paramount – compositions, use of lines and colour, stylised forms of archways and garments – and ‘realism’ is interesting only as an artistic fashion, not as an aid to insight into the way things were. Interpretation is in terms of the great European Metanarrative discussed in Chapter 3, with the archetypal battle between Civilisation and Barbarism. (see Wailes & Zoll 1996 for an excellent analysis of the discourses on so-called *Insular Art*). This approach is not helpful in answering the kinds of questions asked by archaeologists and anthropologists. Discussions, for example, of various depictions of the Virgin Mary or Eve have, in the Art History discourse, been more concerned with tracing influences of the different Schools rather than accessing deep structures instantiated through portrayals of sexual difference. Although much attention is often given to the ‘hands’ (individual scribes) who created the representation [see for example Oakeshott on the Genesis Master (1981: plate 92)], and to the patrons who commissioned the manuscripts, ivories etc (Backhouse, Turner & Webster 1988, Bond & Gillam 1994), little attention is given to the audiences for these depictions. Thus Rouse and Rouse in *Authentic Witnesses*, a very scholarly tome published relatively recently (1991,) raise many promising questions early on, such as ‘Why written? Why at this time? For what purpose? How and why preserved and disseminated’. They argue quite explicitly for a manuscript to be regarded as an archaeological find (Rouse & Rouse 1991: 3) and as an active artefact. Yet the experiencing and reflexivity of the imagery is not discussed.

Perhaps because of this gap between the analysis of many experts on iconography on the one hand and the needs of archaeologists, popular historians, and re-enactors on the other, a ‘supermarket shelf’ approach tends to be used. The volumes on, say, Insular Art or Romanesque Art, are skimmed for any depictions that seem to be relevant. These ‘pictures’ are then used as illustration in publications and displays, or copied for reconstructions. In Grew and De Neergaard’s *Medieval Shoes and Pattens*, for example, 14 extracts from a variety of representational images are used in the chapter on ‘Shoes in Art and Illustration’, most of them from tomb effigies or brasses. (Grew & De Neergaard 1988: 112-122). Although in this particular case all exemplars are

chronologically appropriate to the archaeological material, this care is not always evident in the choice of ‘illustration’ for publications. Thus a 15th century woodcut of cobblers at work is used to illustrate 11th century shoe making (Montembault 1993: 277). Given that one of the main pre-assumptions about the research period being questioned is that of ‘timeless continuity’ (see Chapter 3) such disregard and conflation is disturbing. Furthermore, ‘supermarketing’ ignores the contexts of the representations themselves: the portrayals are presented in a taken-for-granted way as ‘real’, particularly in the case of the images of the Bayeux Tapestry. In popular texts, there are even examples of late 19th century statues of, say, William the Conqueror (Sadourny 1987: 7) or Alfred (Cover picture on the 2002 edition of the *Anglo Saxon Encyclopaedia*) being presented as portraits without the least qualification. Although fascinating as propaganda images related to a late 19th century discourse of power and domination, such images presented as ‘authentic’ portraits are grossly misleading. Such blatant misrepresentation is easy to avoid, but, because of the problems touched on at the beginning of this section, the more subtle inadequacies are more challenging. This will be returned to in the next section of this chapter where the approach for this research will be laid out.

Another problem area, again touched on in Chapter 3, comes from the symbolic importance of some of these representations in modern nationalistic ‘Heritage’ agendas. The exhibition halls housing the Book of Kells in Dublin and the Bayeux Tapestry in Bayeux (Normandy), the disputes over the return of the Lindisfarne Gospels to Durham, the prominent display of the Gotland Rock carvings in the Stockholm Museum, are all examples of the appropriation of images for affirmation of modern national prestige. Other, subtler, agendas are also evident. An exhibition called the ‘Heritage of Rome’ at the British Museum in 1998 affirmed with absolute confidence the Medieval Metanarrative, discussed in Chapter 3-part c. The models on which selection for the 2001 display of Medieval Art in the main hall at Tate Britain, or the exquisitely lit and housed displays of the Musée Cluny in Paris, were based are entirely enigmatic to me. There are also agendas associated with evangelism and the affirmation of the power of the church visible in the displays in cathedrals. Indeed, the illuminated manuscript, ivory or statue is as potent as ever- perhaps, given wider audience,

more potent - in terms of its ability to participate as prestige performer in power games.

There are, however, many ways forward. Although the Art History discourse has little to offer archaeologists, historians working with the 'analytical hermeneutic' approach (see Chapter 3) work outwards from documents to contextualise i.e. to map out the experienced world of the creator of the representations. Thus Demus (1970) discusses the appropriation (he uses the interesting term *usurpation*) of the art of Byzantium by the Venetians in the 11th-12th century to create 'something like a national past' for their emergent polity (Demus 1970: 134). These links are, however, left semi-speculative rather than systematically explored. More recent work is tighter. A recent publication *Illuminating the Book* 1998, (Brown & McKendrick 1998) contains a paper analysing the marginal 'doodles' on a particular document in terms of the early 14th century world in which the doodler lived and his own location in it. Freeman Sandler (Freeman Sandler 1998: 52-68) ranges across the relationships between the clerical and secular world, the widespread phenomena of vagabondage at the time and the ambivalent attitudes towards sexual behaviour (hetero and homosexual), which, in Freeman Sandler's words, the doodler finds '.... grotesquely funny and disgustingly sinful' (Freeman Sandler 1998: 62). Another paper in this volume analyses the changing depictions of the Abraham-Sarah-Hagar triangle from the 11th to the 16th century in terms of the changing perceptions and expectations of women (Mellinkoff 1998). Although the representations considered in *Illuminating the Book* are too late for my needs, the approach is fascinating and shows the potential. Given the amount of work that has been done with prehistoric representations of the human form (e.g. Yates 1993, Hitchcock 1997, Bernard Knapp & Meskell 1997) it seems quite extraordinary that so little use has been made of medieval imagery in this way: it may well be that I am overlooking recent work in this field.

On a more practical level, Carver has tackled the practical problem of how archaeologists can 'use' medieval illustrations (Carver 1986). After discussion of 'image fossils' and 'image vocabulary', Carver proposes an approach that capitalizes on (rather than deplores as distracting) the frequent hand copying of manuscripts. Whilst fully acknowledging the many possible sources of ideas for

amendments and/ or infill, he suggests that in some instances the portrayer drew on his/ her materially experienced world. Carver saw this possibility as enhanced by a shift away by European artists from classical models towards greater realism in the 10th-11th century (Carver 1986: 133). Carver tested his ideas by examining very closely and systematically two versions of the Utrecht Psalter, one of which was copied from the other. Carver then related novel features to the archaeological record. He concentrated on buildings, armour and tools with interesting results (Carver 1986: 137). Carver does however, also recommend the approach for the study of clothing, shoes and body-hair (Carver 1986): 129: body language and posture are obvious additional aspects. The scope for this 'spot the difference' approach can be seen by examination of the two 'Ruth in the Cornfield' pictures shown above (Fig. 8.1).

b) Guidelines for this project.

Setting up a rigorous system for the use of representations, to the standard of the primary sources of actual footwear is not feasible within the scope of this project. The following guidelines are designed to avoid, or at least make transparent, some of the limitations discussed above.

Firstly, a conscious effort has been made to use a variety of media. This is not variety for its own sake, but because of contrasts in the socio-cultural locus of the different kinds of representations. A large statue located above the south door of a major cathedral will be viewed by many more people – and a wider range of people from rich to poor – than an illuminated manuscript in a monastic library or a privately owned ivory of a wealthy patron. It must be said straightaway that there is very little publicly accessible statuary of the human form from the 9th-11th century, partly for survival reasons but also because it was never common. Tombs from this earlier period do not carry the human effigy and those of monarchs from this period are almost always later additions (e.g. the tomb of Rollo in Rouen and nearly all the Merovingian tombs in St Denis are 13th century, as the footwear amply confirms). Early churches probably had wall paintings but, at least in Northern Europe, 9th-11th century churches themselves rarely survived

the great rash of stone church building in the late 11th-12th centuries, let alone the murals. The 12th century is another matter.

Great care has been taken over the dating of the representations within the research period. It has not been possible to check the dating, in the way the stratigraphic contextual records were examined for the primary record. Some dates do seem tentative and stylistically typological; if the date is clearly provisional and relative, the representation has not been included. Nevertheless, many of the items do have detailed provenances, having been inventoried in monastic libraries and later collections: a 50-year tolerance seems quite feasible for these.

The selection of examples for detailed recording is harder to systematise. Much has depended on accidents of availability, whether in libraries, museums or in situ: undoubtedly, 'Anglo-Saxon' portrayals are over represented in this project. Some representations such as the figures from the Book of Kells, the Coronation of Otto as Holy Roman Emperor and the statuette of Charlemagne come up repeatedly, which does not necessarily make them the most useful. Nevertheless, decisions have to be made. Overall, around a thousand representations of the period have been viewed, 'supermarket shelf' style, of which 120 have been selected for detailed scrutiny. The selection of these is based on:

- a) Reliable dating and production locating within the research domain
- b) Presence of at least some shod feet
- c) Interactivity of context, preferably involving mixture of people (servants, women, children, kings etc).
- d) Secularity of context with the non-biblical event prioritised over the biblical event.

Details are then recorded onto a single record sheet, to ensure systematic scrutiny. Because of the complexity of the compositions and content, no attempt was made to transfer data onto a database, except for the basic inventory (Appendix 3). Where feasible, the representation was photocopied or

photographed. Otherwise, sketches were made. Figure 8.2 shows a record sheet completed in the field.

The records were then placed in chronological order, spread out in sequence and scrutinised for similarity/ dissimilarity of footwear with other footwear in the representation and in contemporary representations. The observations are then compared with variations in the appropriate archaeological footwear. Particular attention is paid to any variability seemingly associated with other body wear variables such as head and body coverings, and this is examined to see if there seems to be a relationship to the embodied distinctions related to age, sex or physiological difference. There are clear dangers of circular reasoning in the latter – identifying a signifier as one used in the performance of ‘young male warriorhood’ for example when the performer has been identified as ‘young male warrior’ *by* the signifier e.g. a sword.

c) The images of feet



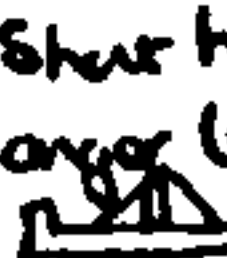




For the most part, this section will work through the research period. There are, however, some pertinent general points to be dealt with first. These relate to the iconography- the graphic vocabulary - of the naked foot and the sandal

In mainstream Christian iconography, the bare foot is a powerful and near absolute signifier of ultimate holiness. Jesus is hardly ever portrayed as shod. The bare foot is usually interpreted as a symbol of holy poverty (Henry 1974: 183, Grew & De Neergaard 1988: 112). This justifies the bare feet of apostles or prophets, but is less plausible for angels who are also barefoot in most North European representations (though shod in Byzantine ones). Where shod, many biblical characters wear sandals, shown by schematic lines across the foot in earlier images though by the 12th century sandals are represented much more realistically. A sandal for this purpose is defined as a separate sole with a strip anchored in the sole to fasten the sole to the foot. This anchorage is usually fastened to the sole between the first and second toe, and travels diagonally across the instep to anchor on the outside.

Figure 8.2 Example of hand completed record sheet for representations

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--------------------|
| Ref. name Ms. lat. 5058 ff 2v-3. Josephus - De Belle Judaico. | | present loc Paris - Bib. Nat. | type Man. |
| Circulation via Heissac. | | production loc St-Sernis, Toulouse. | date late 11th. |
| Theme Jos presents his book to Tiberius Vespasian. | | penref Rabb Y3: 173. | No. of figs 14. |

| Images - types and numbers | | | * supplicant | |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------|------------------|---------------|
| God | Christ | Priests | Rulers 2 | Artisans |
| Queen of Heaven | Mary | Monks | Rulers spouses | Foot soldiers |
| Demon | Saint m | Nuns | Courtiers 1 | Entertainers |
| Angel | Saint f | Postulants | Mounted soldiers | Traders |
| Archangel | Evangelist | | Court servants | Ag. workers |
| | other biblical | | | Beggars |
| other Author of BRL - 1 | | | | |

| Image | Body covering | | | C |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| | Footwear | Clothing | Headwear | |
| Rulers. (seated on thrones) | Top view for all 4 feet - slipper type shoes.  hose? | Caesar. Dyed out-gown, cloak unfasted over both shoulders. left - loose sleeve. Right - tight sleeve with cuff. Belt in right hand. Handkerchief  | Short hair + beard.  | |
| Josephus (Author) standing, looking at T+V, presenting book. | Row boot with prominent sole.  hose. | Short (knee) tunic - very full. Short cloak. Hose with wider bands. Drapery across chest. Belt in both hands, held up. | Short curly 'big' hair. Short dark beard.  | |
| Courtiers. (seems round about page) | Only 4 legs visible. Like but 1 has shading at heel  | Josephus Short tunics. | Heavily unbraided, short curly hair. 1 with hat?  | |

No archaeological evidence for true sandals from the medieval period exists in Northern Europe, although there are many examples from the period of Romanisation (thus defeating functionalist explanations of absence based on the unsuitability of sandals for northern climates).

More secular biblical characters, such as King David, are always shod and indeed seem to be clothed in something close to contemporary ‘kingly’ dress. Figure 8.3 shows four representations of David from different times in the research period: the court of David is a popular theme, as are ‘warrior’ events from the life of David such the slaying of Goliath and the killing of the lion.

Female biblical characters are almost always shod with the obvious exception of Eve and sometimes Salome; interestingly, the Virgin Mary (who one would have thought at least as holy as the apostles) is nearly always shown wearing shoes, even in childbirth (Nativity) and on her deathbed (Dormition) – both of which are admittedly portrayed as very public patriarchal occasions. Non-biblical characters of varying sex, age and status (popes, bishops, abbots, saints, monks, nuns, kings, queens, servants, musicians, young men and women, soldiers, workmen, children etc) are nearly all shod with shoes (not sandals). Exceptions do, then, seem to be significant. Some bare feet are related to contexts of public humiliation and obeisance, as in the tributes brought by subject peoples to Otto. Bare feet are also found in contexts of ‘sinful delights’ such as in the personification of Luxuria in the classically derived ‘Psychomachia’. Finally, portrayals of barbarians such as that of the Scots in the Book of Kells (Henry:1974) or the 12th century manuscript showing the Danes sacking a city and martyring St Edmund often show the ‘savages’ as barefooted. Figure 8.4 shows some examples of bare feet in context: see also the beggars in the Paris Psalter, Figure 3.2b.

Clearly this whole theme of foot-nakedness is a major topic in its own right, in terms of embodied identity. It is, however, archaeologically inaccessible in any way: the following accounts will concentrate on the footwear itself, though the bare feet as symbolic icon are a perpetual presence in the representations.

Image removed due to third party copyright

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a) 8th century
British Library, Cotton Vespasian A f.30v

b) Mid 11th century
Dodwell 1954: Pl 10

Image removed due to third party copyright

Image removed due to third party copyright

c) Late 11th/early 12th century
Rose 1987: 24

d) 12th century
Westminster Abbey Psalter

Figure 8.3. Portrayals of David, the role-model King, over time.

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a) Subservience.
From 'Homage to Otto III'
Late 10th century.
Dunan 1966: 286

Image removed due to third party copyright

b) Barbarism
Danes in the 'Life of St Edmund'
Early 12th century.
Savage 1997: 90

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d) Licentiousness
Luxuria from 'Psychomachia'
Late 10th century.
from Beckwith 1970: 34

c) Holiness
Christ enthroned, from 'Sacramentary of Robert of Jumieges'
11th century.
from Rose 1987: 27

Figure 8.4 Barefoot Contexts

i) 9th century and earlier

These phases (11 and 12) are represented by a range of manuscripts, ivories and statuary from the Christian zones and by rock-carvings and the Oseberg Tapestry in the northeast.

Henry has produced a useful summary of shoe styles shown in Insular Manuscripts i.e those associated with early Irish monasticism, St Columba and others. (Henry 1974: 184), shown in Figure 8.5.

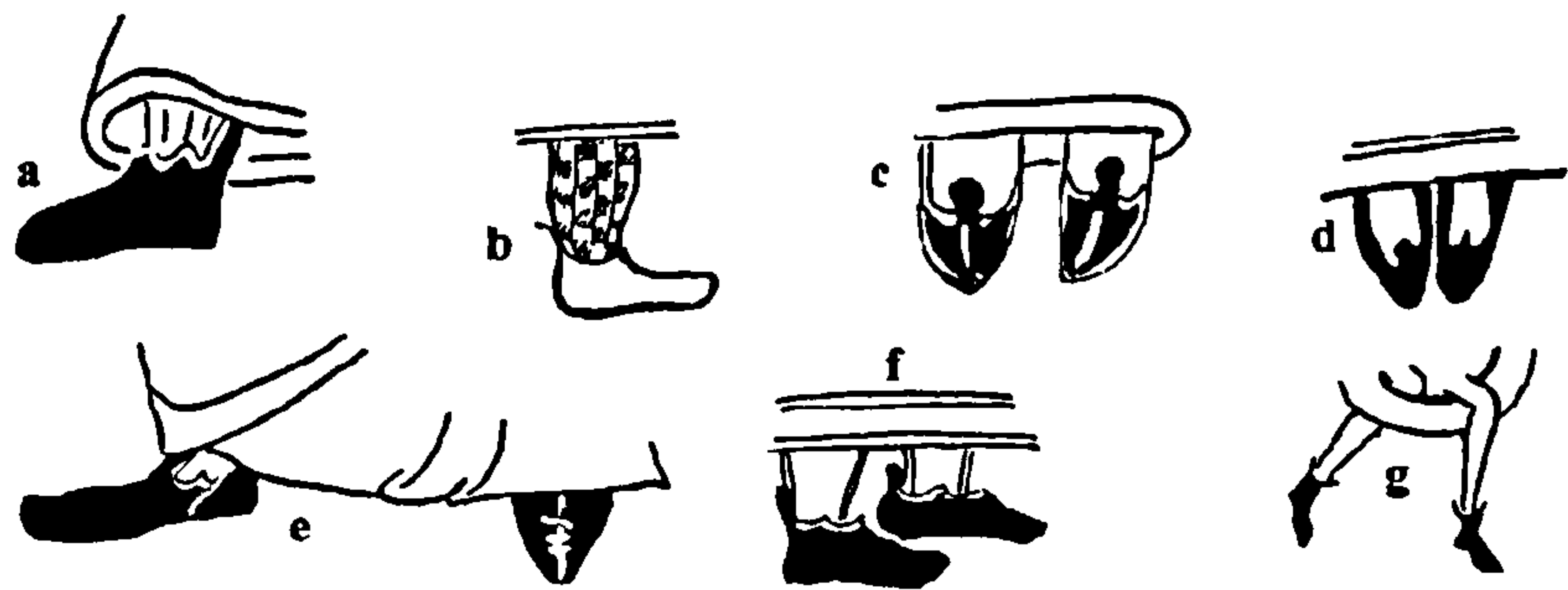


Figure 8.5 Footwear from Early Insular manuscripts.

Adapted from Henry 1974: 184

- a. Book of Mulling b. Book of Durrow c. Book of Mac Durnan d. Book of Dimma**
e. MS Barbarini, Vatican f. MS from St Gall g. Book of Kells

The footwear, although variable in detail, clearly has much in common with the footwear from Iona, Chelles, Moutiers and Middelburg (see Chapter 7). Some of the shoes have tabs over the instep and extensions up the back of the heel, fastening with straps and/or drawstrings. The 8th century David shown in Figure 8.3 has similar slippers with crossover drawstrings and a similar style is worn by St Ezekiel in an AD810 ivory, produced in Aachen (Carolingian Gospels Cover: displayed at Victoria and Albert Museum, London). This style also is found in two 6th century ivories from Constantinople where it is worn by the Emperor in his Consular role (Consular Diptyches of Flavius Anastasius and Gennadius Probus Orestes, both on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

From the Iona, Chelles, Moutiers and Middelburg evidence, these do seem to be living styles (not purely iconic) and it is very tempting to put the Lucas Type 1s in this group, with their slightly elevated heels, decorated vamps and tabs. At this stage, monastic clothing was far from the imposed uniform that came with the late 10th century Benedictine reforms and the rise of Cluny: at this stage, local inventiveness seems to have been considerable but only within a distinctive repertoire using high-visibility features.

This perception of an alternative 'church style' is strengthened by the fact that the 'mainstream' footwear of the North, i.e the foot-covering shoe with vamp stripe, does so appear in some representations. In an Aachen Virgin Enthroned ivory, the Virgin wears encasing vamp striped shoes, as does everyone (Mary, Elizabeth, servants) in a Northumbrian Visitation scene (Beckwith 1972: 21/118). The statuette of Charlemagne is particularly useful, as, according to his contemporary Einhard, Charlemagne was celebrated for wearing the 'clothes of the people' (Dutton 1993:36). Mounted on his horse, he is wearing foot-enclosing ankle shoes with a marked vamp stripe/seam and tied laces at the throat. The corners of the foot opening are folded back (Fig. 8.6). It is not possible to tell whether these are vamp-seamed or one-piece –upper cuts, but the overall shape and repertoire lies within the mainstream repertoire, unlike the ones described in the last paragraph.

There is a good case, then, for reiterative statement of religious identity for men through markedly different footwear from the mainstream at this stage. The situation for women is rather more subdued. Women's feet are simply clad in mainstream footwear and, in fact exaggeratedly small in many representations. Perhaps significantly, though, one of the very few 'barefoot' Virgins dates from the earliest phase, the Virgin in the Book of Kells. This embodiment of mother and child is unusual in many ways, but this raises more questions than can be explored here.

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Figure 8.6
Bronze statuette of
Charlemagne from Metz
Cathedral Treasury.
Probably 9th century.

Image removed due to third party copyright

from Dunan 1966:275

ii) 10th century

In the representations, the tabbed low cut shoe continues to be shown on the feet of those identified as religious. In a manuscript portrayal showing Aldhelm and the nuns of Barking Abbey, both Aldhelm and the nuns wear low-cut tabbed shoes, although not elevated at the back. (One of the nuns, however, wears a ‘mainstream’ ankle-shoe with a vamp stripe pattern). Low cut slippers are also worn by the scribes in a manuscript from Reichenau, and the Pope and monks in a manuscript from Christchurch, Canterbury: in the Reichenau scene, an Archbishop wears heavily patterned shoes (Robb 1973: 130). Although the shoes of St Benedict in an early 11th century portrayal are foot covering, they are decorated with a large fleur de lis type cross and are not the sandals prescribed under his regime (Brown 1991: 59).

Footwear shown in semi-secular contexts, however is much more ‘mainstream’. King Edgar, in a Winchester Psalter illumination, wears the kind of symmetrical ankle shoes which are very common in the archaeological record for the 10th century (Savage 1997: 131) and Otto III at his court is shown wearing tight

fitting, vamp striped low boots. (Dunan 1966:289) The footwear of women continues to be very simple and scaled down. This is as true of Cnut's wife (Dunan 1966:294) as it is of the Virgin, although the nuns of Barking Abbey do seem to have defied this prescription (Temple 1976: 62, fig 132). The nuns are, however, as heavily draped with covered heads as are all of the women shown in representations – the sexuality of women's bodies is invisible except, of course, in the case of Eve and sometimes Salome.

Of the large numbers of shoes from these phases in the primary and secondary samples, none are of the embroidered and/or tabbed kinds depicted in some of the illuminations. None of these archaeological shoes are known to be associated with monastic or ecclesiastical contexts, so perhaps this lack of match is not surprising. Nevertheless, this is the time of a widespread fashion, in London, Dublin and York, for low cut slipper-type footwear. Although simpler than the illustrated ones, these are more like the 'religious' shoes than the secular footwear of the previous century. It is impossible to take this further without a 10th century monastic assemblage of some kind, but there could be some connection. It is worth remembering that these low cut shoes nearly all had Back Points therefore are probably women's shoes.

The AOPs must be brought in here. It has already been suggested that these are associated with religious iconic conventions, and the position seems stronger than ever. The asymmetry, decorative style and sheer 'difference' of these shoes marks them out as signifiers of this kind. Their find location relatively near the great and early-founded cathedral of St Paul's in London, whilst not proving anything, does not negate the proposition. These shoes are also, where complete enough to ascertain, Back-Pointed and small-medium adult size: a community of nuns?

iii) 11th century

The number of surviving portrayals from these phases (2 and 3) is much greater than for the preceding phases. Historians identify many different Schools by the 11th century, with highly distinctive graphic styles. The footwear shown is,

however, much less varied than in previous phases. The earlier conventions do survive, thus a manuscript from Avranches (mid-11th) shows Gregory the Great in low cut embroidered shoes and a monk-painter in the background with heel-extended low cut shoes secured around the ankle (Alexander 1978: plate 29). Several, such as one from Echternach (mid-11th) of a bishop (Ohlgren 1986: plate 38) and one from Douai (late 11th-12th) of St Stephen (Dodwell 1954: plate 32c), show the fleur-de lis pattern noted above on Benedict's shoes. For the most part, however, the footwear of 11th century portrayals is unremarkable, shown simply as ankle-height and symmetrical with rounded toes. The Bayeux Tapestry, which contains 626 figures, shows footwear in detail only in the case of Edward the Confessor whose shoes carry a broad vamp stripe. With the other (younger) men in the Tapestry, striped hose/ leg bindings and garters seem to carry much more signifying power. Not too much should be made of this association between vamp stripe and Anglo-Saxon royalty – in many other portrayals (see for example, the Witangemot representation from a mid-11th century paraphrase of the Bible, Savage 1997:213) whole groups of men are shown with vamp striped shoes. Other 'close-ups' such as the footwear of the Magi and Virgin (see Figure 8.9) are similar, though with topband clearly shown and a vent at the throat. At this stage, toes are generally, though not always, rather pointed. Examples of 11th century footwear representation are shown in Figure 8.3 for the 11th century David.

It is not however until the very end of the 11th century that an example occurs on a tomb plaque of the extended curved toes which will become a feature of the 12th century footwear. This plaque in Merseburg Cathedral commemorates Rodolfe of Swabia and is the earliest definite representation of the curved toe found so far (Durliat 1982: 307). Another novelty is the footwear of the three personages in the Life of St Omer manuscript who are wearing midcalf boots, rising towards the back, over what appears to be patterned hose (Durliat 1982: 125). Again, more of this will be seen in the 12th century portrayals.

I have argued (Chapters 6 and 7) that the mid-late 11th century over North West Europe was a time of commonality of footwear styles across an unexpectedly wide area. In that footwear seems to be less important to illustrators and shown as

much the same, simple shoe, this commonality is confirmed. The 'old' icons linger on, but have not actually been replaced by anything new. The extensive use of the vamp stripe in representations compared with the actual assemblages (with the exception of London) might seem to link this decorative form to the upper classes, but its incidence in remote Borgund and market place Duisburg shows that the vamp stripe is far from exclusive to the ruling class. Neither are there differences in the representations between men and women when it comes to vamp stripes: women are as likely to be wearing vamp-striped shoes as men.

One curious point is the lack of anything in the vast majority of portrayals indicating fastening methods at this date. The intra-site variety of methods is great in the 11th century, with triple latches and side lacings seeming particularly 'portrayable'. Yet apart from what seem to be drawstring slots around the ankle of Cnut's ankle-shoes in a Winchester manuscript (Dunan 1966:294), no hint whatsoever is given of fastenings and the shoes are portrayed as if a kind of outer skin. Neither are there signs of the lined side vents that are common in the actual footwear.

iv) 12th century

Representations of the human body from the 12th century are abundant. For the first time since the classical period, large-scale statuary is part of the public domain. The Porta de la Gloria at Santiago de Compostella contains hundreds of larger than life figures including apostles, saints, prophets, secular and biblical kings and commoners bringing their children to see. The fact that this huge propaganda display does not contain a single female figure – not even the Virgin Mary – is not without significance: it may be an accident of my survey methods, but female icons do seem to be scarcer by this stage, although not absent.

The longstanding iconic conventions in footwear do persist in places. In the Compostella ensemble, most of the men are barefoot and some (why these?) realistically sandaled. The only biblical individual shod secular-style is St Peter, standing with his key at the gate to Heaven – the interface between the sacred and

the profane. Elsewhere, however, such bare feet and sandals do seem to have become less common.

The ankle-height, often vamp striped, shoe continues to be worn by many iconographic personages up to the middle of the 12th century. All of the footwear shown in the so-called Anglo-Norman manuscripts is of this familiar kind, often with the knee-high wrappings common in 11th century portrayals. A series of anatomical drawings from the early 12th (Mynors 1939: No 57) shows most of the participants in shoes of this type although one has quite a different style on his feet. This 'mixture' is important. In a mid-12th century manuscript from the Abbey of Bavaria, for example, St Felicitas has traditionally shaped vamp striped shoes peeping out from her long skirts but her seven adolescent sons are clad in brightly patterned hose with no apparent footwear, presumably the sole-only hose discussed earlier (displayed at the British Museum).

These 'soled hose' feature in a number of other portrayals from the later part of the 12th century. Thus in the Winchester Bible (Oakeshott 1981: plate 91) the young David is shown always in patterned hose with no sign of shoes and the late 12th century portrayal of Barbarossa from Fulda shows his sons in the same style. In this case, the father (bearded and shown as larger than the two young men) is shod with low-cut high backed shoes, which fasten around the ankle (Durliat 1982: 192). These low-cut high backs come up in many 12th century portrayals. The earliest I have seen is in a portrayal of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV dating to around 1100 (Dodwell 1954: Pl 57a) but there are many others e.g. Herod and friends in a Toulouse bas relief (Durliat 1982: Pl 50). They even come up on the feet of a 'Viking' in the 12th century St Edmund's flagellation of St Edmund from Bury St Edmunds and in a chalkstone relief from Falster, Denmark involving priest and noblemen. (Nationalmuseet Copenhagen) A final novelty is the hooked toes mentioned at the end of the last chapter. Although it is possible to interpret iconographic hooked toes as a decorative foliage-effect (see Figure 8.7d, for example), there are a number of unmistakeable 'real' cases. The shoes of the soldiers in the Temple Pyx from London are a well-known example (Savage 1997: 187), but extravagant toes also feature on the feet of the young fallen horseman in the Citeaux letter (Fig. 8.8), on the feet of the Emperor's son

(Dodwell 1954: Pl 57a) and on the feet of masons building a cathedral (Nationalmuseet Copenhagen). The Falster shoes, mentioned above, are not only low-cut but also seem (shown only in profile) to have these elongated toes. The two earliest tomb effigies in St Denis dated to around AD 1160 (commemorating Clovis and Childebert 1st) also wear hooked toes (personal observation). Some of these variants are shown in Figure 8.7 and 8.8.

All of the variations mentioned in the previous paragraph are found only on the feet of men. The hooked toes and sole-hose are restricted to young beardless men, often portrayed in athletic pose, brandishing the whole leg, and often in a horse-riding (as soldier or as huntsman) context. (Cahn 1996: Pl 281, Pacht 1986: see also Figure 8.8). The low-cut shoe is more associated with older 'senior' men of high rank. Where women do feature, their footwear is entirely 'traditional', at most a stylised and established decorative pattern on the vamp, and the same conservatism is found in the footwear of church elders.

It is perhaps a reflection of the increased 'realism' in 12th century portrayals (see Carver's comments above) that there is a close match between the variations in the portrayed footwear and the archaeological record. The continuations of 11th century styles in the Anglo-Norman manuscripts and statuary fits well with the continuation in London, Rouen and Winchester of the 11th century style of shoe, shown in chapters 6 and 7. The low cut shoes, on the other hand, are very like some of the Oslo shoes described in chapter 7, and the portrayals showing them are from the more easterly and northeasterly representation sites, such as Falster and Fulda. It is a great shame that no secondary sources for footwear were found for the middle Rhineland/Bavaria area.

The experimental toes have a more complex distribution. No examples of these forms were found in the Anglo-Norman representational corpus, but there are a number of archaeological examples from London and one-offs from Lynn, Durham, York and Rouen. These 'oddities' exist alongside the highly conservative (though often very well made) footwear, which is more characteristic of those places. The only seeming anomaly are the curly toes of the 3 soldiers in the Temple Pyx (Figure 8.7): not only, however, does this little

bronze reliquary fragment come from one of the literally exotic locations in London i.e the post-crusade Templar church, but it was probably made in Germany according to the catalogue to the Burrell Collection, Glasgow. If, then, these innovations were coming from the court of the Holy Roman Empire or, in some less obvious way, Scandinavian merchant cities such as Oslo and Bergen, the extended-toe shoes from the western sites raise some interesting questions about a more subversive role for these new shapes of footwear in the west. This suggestion is strengthened by the relatively low quality of the innovatory shoes in the western context compared with the contemporary local 'traditional' footwear. In the west, most of the innovative shoes are roughly cut, unbound and only cheaply decorated, unlike the silk embroidered, exquisitely bound and finished 'traditional' styles from the Guildhall Yard, Seal House and other 12th century London sites. Winchester, however, does not seem to participate in these 12th century fashions, although this may well be related to the very small 12th century sample from this city.

The 12th Century in North West Europe is often presented as the great flowering period of Romanesque art and architecture. At the same time, taken conventionally from Suger's rebuild of the chancel at St Denis in the late 11th, the 12th century is the time of the rapid spread of Gothic art and architecture. There are, I think, potential links between this and the contrasts and diversity in 12th century footwear, and the whole question of the body: the illustration in Figure 8.8 from Citeaux illustrates this, I think, in every detail of body language. It is far beyond the scope of this research project to explore this properly, but will be referred to in the final, concluding 'Ways Forward' section.

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Image removed due to third party copyright

a) Funerary plaque of Robert of
Swabia, Merseburg Cathedral
Late 11th century

Image removed due to third party copyright

b) Temple Pyx Reliquary
Made in Germany
Mid-12th century

Image removed due to third party copyright

c) Frederic Barbarossa and sons
In Landesbibliothek, Fulda
Late 12th century

d) Initial letter with `foliate` feet.
From manuscript in Bodleian Library
Mid-12th century

Figure 8.7 Hooked, extended toes.

d) Final Comments

This overview has charted some curious changes. It would seem that stylistic conventions in depictions of footwear shifted over time so styles which were ‘mainstream’ i.e. secular, in the 8th-9th century were being used by the late 11th and 12th centuries to represent traditional high status religious values: the shoes of Popes. That these were also used in the representations for women is also interesting, but not perhaps surprising. The clothing of the gerontocrats and theocrats had always been more like that of women (long, flowing, layered) than that of young men of the warrior class (short tunics or culottes with a shoulder pinned cloak and plenty of leg showing). Only headgear and facial hair distinguish women from ‘old men’ in many cases up until the mid 11th century.

Taken overall (and not forgetting the strictures about inadequate and inconsistent sampling etc), this survey has suggested the following relationships between representations and actual footwear. In the early period (7th –9th centuries) the great variety of forms of footwear depicted was consistent with a wide regional variation in what was actually being worn by those identifying with the religious. This seems to apply in the contexts of both the Irish church and the Rome-centred church. The shortage of ‘mainstream’ forms could be attributed to a lack of interest in these by the artists – irrelevant, maybe even damaging, to the messages of the icons. The 10th century was a confused period for the portrayers but the mainstream forms began to displace the religious forms. The 11th century saw a high degree of convergence in both representational and actual footwear but towards the end major changes were taking place in the east and north that were only marginally picked up in the west. This latter could not have been simply due to ignorance – the Normans were just as involved in multi-cultural crusader migrations as anyone else – but must have been the outcome of active rejection of the new ideas by the Norman elite. The vituperation of Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury about ‘scorpion toes’ (Stubbs 1889, Chibnell 1980) is consonant with the absence of these in the iconic corpus, and the apparent active

continuity in Norman England of the ‘old’ styles, albeit in luxury form, is particularly interesting.

Figure 8.8 Contrasts in embodiment: two letter Qs,
From Gregory's 'Job in Moralia', Citeaux, Burgundy.
Early 12th century.
From Pacht 1986

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Women occupy an interesting position in all this. In the earliest phases, they seem to share the variability of the male as far as footwear is concerned but quite rapidly over the 10th century in the representations, their feet become tiny, nominal, covered. By the 12th century women are consigned to the 'traditional' or, increasingly, their feet are concealed behind folds of dress. This is summarised in Figure 8.9. Yet on the secular Liege caskets, young girls are dancing in multicoloured calf boots and body-clinging tunics, just about as far from the swathings of the 10th -11th century portrayals as it is possible to imagine. This active sexualisation of the female body has not reached the religious iconography by the end of the 12th century, although it will do so eventually (see for example St Agnes on the Royal Golden Cup of the Kings of England and France, dated to 1380).

Out of all the chapters in this thesis, this is the one that has suffered most from the isolation of a postgraduate PhD worker. It has generated far more questions than there was time to answer. Its chief benefit has been to show the malleability of images of the human form and the ways in which they could be relating to how people actually acted out their identities. My suggestion is that the *actual* preceded the *iconic*, on the whole. i.e that until the 12th century at least and the public display of images, the images that we value so much today, taken from Kells or Lindisfarne or Bayeux had little influence on what people were actually doing and were, over time, reflectors rather than inspirers, at least in Northern Europe.

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a

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c

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b

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d

e

Figure 8.9 Images of women.
a) Named woman from Bayeux Tapestry, late 11th century
b) Refugee from Bayeux Tapestry
c) Emperor, son and wife from Doner Bible, Fulda, mid-12th century
d) Virgin from Edgar presenting to Winchester, mid-10th century
e) An unusually potent Virgin from an Anglo-Norman ivory, mid-11th century.

Section C

Synthesis

This third and last section comprises mainly of Chapter 9, the sum of all things i.e a synthesis. The thesis ends with a set of suggestions about ways forward, in terms of both the footwear itself and the theoretical issues raised.

Chapter 9

Embodied identification as process: performativity through footwear in Mid-Medieval Northern Europe

‘... you could look at people’s shoes and know exactly how business was, and more than that, you could tell from their shoe styles what their business was. The Philippine friends had these huge pebbly-orange or purplish American shoes, the ones from Singapore and Hong Kong had English-style, and rather smaller, without laces, and other people had low, narrow Italian ones with thin soles, banker’s shoes. Ours were old fashioned, square toes and stitched, and some were scuffed from the train we were staying with friends, not in hotels where the room boys polish them every night ... ‘

Paul Theroux

‘A Burial at Surabaya’

Collected Short Stories
1997

Introduction: Progress so far

This thesis began with the ambivalence of the concept of ‘identity’, reconceptualising this to a process of contextualised identification. This process can be experienced by the actor-individual as more or less constrained. A sense of likeness to or difference from others can be embedded in a doxic set of beliefs, values and assumptions made real through taken-for-granted and unconscious comparison and continuously reiterated (performed) through habituated actions. Alternatively the doxic can be actively brought into the ‘universe of discourse’: challenged, appropriated, subverted and redefined through one’s own and significant others actions and perceptions. The success or failure of such strategies is the subject of countless dramas in North European tales, and always rooted in embodied transformations. Such transformation in the embodied presence are not restricted to body wear, but can involve redefining the body

itself. Part of Laqueur's evidence for the one-sex theoretical model taken for granted for most of European history – i.e that females are simply inverted, and therefore inferior, anatomical males - are constant warnings about how 'male-type' over-energetic activity could result in the genitalia of *women* spontaneously everting, making them *men* (Laqueur 1990: 126-8). Stories about the restoration of the youthful body and the avoidance of death abound – indeed, such a transformation lies at the root of Christianity.

The use of dress, body language, body hair etc in instantiating – performing-identity to an audience does not need to be laboured here, having been so well summarised by Bourdieu (Chapter 1) and Goffman (1959, 1981, 1983, 1986 and many more). Even in a modern interview system, supposedly highly objective and targeted towards the interviewee's occupational competency, the first impression, based almost wholly on embodied non-verbal performativity in the first 5 seconds of contact, counts the most. Embodied impression management, as Goffman would call it, is overwhelmingly important in face-to-face interaction – indeed, in an important sense, it constitutes intersubjective interaction. Yet it would be quite wrong to assume that all individuals are free to decide on how they will present themselves – to manage their impressions on other people - even if the taken for granted, habituated nature of their conceptualising is set aside. Indeed, Bourdieu and other European theorists would argue strongly that power elites maintain their positions mainly through clever manipulation of subject peoples self-images and sense of propriety i.e through corporalised ideologies.

Bourdieu develops this through the concept of *symbolic violence*, the proposition of 'the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning on groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate' (Jenkins 1992: 104, summarising Bourdieu. See Bourdieu & Passeron 1979: xiii, Bourdieu 1977: 191-2, and the whole of Bourdieu 1984). In a later publication, Bourdieu has moved far enough away from his unreflexive approach to gender in the 1970s to say that '... gender domination seems to me to be the paradigmatic form of symbolic violence' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:170). In the 1980s, such interpretations (often labelled as neo-Marxist) were quite widespread in archaeology, perhaps most famously represented in *Domination and Resistance*,

published in 1989 and edited by Miller, Rowlands and Tilley. With the shift in focus to the inter-subjective and micro scale in the 1990s, the reified concept of 'ideology' has gone out of favour, and although Bourdieu is much quoted in recent work (see Tilley 1999 for example) his *symbolic violence* thinking is set aside. Hodder points out the dangers of this, i.e that if agency is seen as a politically neutral concept, 'how can it be used for purposes other than legitimising social relations by uncritically projecting them back in time?' (Hodder 2000: 13). In the same volume, Gero expresses similar concerns in relation to the politics of gender (Gero 2000).

In the later Middle Ages in England, a mass of sumptuary laws laid down the colour, material and styles of clothing and the specific length of shoe toes appropriate to each social class, prescribing punishments for retailers and consumers who breached these laws. (Pickering: Sumptuary Regulations 1363). The very incorporation of such regulation into written law implies a breakdown in the doxa and a perception of subversion through the body. This is not the place to consider this in full context, but the politics of the body must not be forgotten. Making an impression, in Goffman's terms, is an act of micro-politics, a power game at the interpersonal level. To argue that the variability in footwear in Mid-Medieval Northern Europe can be used to chart the micro-politics of impression management may seem fanciful. Nevertheless, that is what this last chapter will try to do.

In Section B (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) the main approach used was chronological, to ensure appropriate comparison. For the 'Middle Range' theory to hold, there had to be at least a chance of living people – whether consumer or producer – to witness alternatives, whether or not they chose to emulate them. In this final chapter, the approach is more thematic. Firstly, the notion of diffusion by simple propinquity is applied, to see to what extent patterns of similarity/dissimilarity fit. Secondly, Carr's model of visibility contrasts is applied, to test some of the initial thinking about high and low visibility traits. This involves looking at distributional patterns and using Carr's bridging constructs – this part builds on any insights from the first part. The discussion will then move onto intra site footwear variation (considered for relationship to sex/gender, age/peer group,

birth estate/ social class and other possible structural elements). Change over time will begin to be important at this stage. Finally in this thematic section, inter site comparison, bringing in processes of identifying with racial-ethnic-hegemonic groupings, will be looked at and at this stage the testing of the identity groupings assigned by historians (both at the time and since then) will become inevitable. Finally, the overall situation will be examined using the framework model offered at the end of chapter 4.

a) Propinquity

‘Diffusion’ as an archaeological concept is often used as a self-explanatory term, as if it is a kind of natural osmotic process whereby new ways of doing spread out over wider and wider areas. Underlying this are teleological ideas about rational choice based on the new way being better than the old, a kind of evolutionary movement in the direction of greater ‘fitness’. The earlier discussions in this thesis have made clear that I consider this a seriously inadequate approach, that the very notion of ‘better than’ is culturally rooted and that it is no more ‘natural’ to copy ones neighbours than it is to create difference. Nevertheless, simple propinquity is worth examination as a starting point, if only because without some kind of contact there is no possibility of a different way of doing being either copied or rejected.

The problem comes, of course, with defining propinquity in meaningful terms. Direct geographical distances are easy to measure. A matrix of distances for the primary footwear sites used in this project gives the lowest score – i.e. closest on average to the other places – as Lynn and the highest score to Borgund, the most Northerly site. (See Appendix 8). Nearest neighbour, however, at this time is not a matter of simple distance in a straight line. Movement overland was restricted to foot or animal transport, and transport by water (sea or river) was important for the bulk movement of heavy goods. Both methods were potentially vulnerable to attack, taxation and other constraints imposed by those with coercive power, as well as hazards such as storm and flood. The decisions taken at any one time must have been complex involving a high degree of risk assessment based on knowledge passed on through a web of oral contacts. To allow to some extent for

this, a second matrix was drawn up involving water-borne links. In this, Norwich rather than nearby Lynn scored lowest as the most accessible, located with access to the North Sea. Hedeby-Schleswig, now penalised by the long trip around Jutland through the Kattegat comes out as the most remote in this matrix (which does not include Baltic sites). Rather more unexpectedly, Gloucester, located at the head of the Severn estuary, comes out as more remote in terms of sea journeys than Dublin with its location on the 'Sea Road' around the north of Scotland.

In reality, decisions about trade movements, whether of bulk goods such as Rhineland lava quern stones over long distance or agricultural produce to nearby market places, or the itineraries of travelling skilled craftsmen must have been highly contextualised. One would expect, for example, the longship phenomenon to have some impact on the movement decisions of 9th -10th century travellers. Yet the longships themselves brought face to face contacts with Others, and indeed carried away large numbers of people to be sold in locations – Dublin, Rouen, Cordoba- where they themselves became Other. The peripatetic habits of the rulers (see map in Fig. 9.1), the popularity of pilgrimage and the movements around of those associated with religious institutions, the mass movements of refugees (as charted in the Anglo-Saxon and Frankish chronicles), the movement of Danish colonists into the Danelaw and Normans into Normandy, the 12th century forest clearances and Ost Siedlung and crusade implementation processes further complicate the issue of propinquity: what price 'timeless continuity' for many people? This is more like the turbulent flow of chaos theory.

Nevertheless, some interesting points do emerge. The Pilot study geographical area was defined in terms of propinquity (see Fig. 5.7). A high degree of conformity in the footwear in this area was noted. With the exception of the London AOPs, which remain enigmatic and 'freakish', the only assemblage with marked differences was that from 10th century Bruges: indeed, my interpretation at the time was one of wrong dating for the Bruges shoes. Widening the context, however, showed that the 'oddities' of the Bruges shoes were 'normal' in Duurstede, Elisenhof and other North Sea east and south coastal assemblages of the earlier phases.

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Figure 9.1 Royal Itineraries: 11th and 12th century France and Germany
Taken from Mackay & Ditchburn 1997: 53

Propinquity, it would seem, counted for something. The footwear of London was very like that of relatively nearby Oxford, Winchester and 11th century Norwich, and unlike that from remote (in terms of this matrix) Hedeby. On the other hand, the London shoes are in important ways more like those of relatively remote York and even remoter Dublin than they are like those of nearby Bruges. The anomalous character of a shoe from Middelburg (in term of propinquity to the other Pilot Study sites) has turned out to be probably related to identification with formal church embodiment, and this has also been suggested for the AOPs (Chapters 7 and 8).

The convergence of footwear styles in the research domain in the 11^h century has been mentioned, and could be seen as ‘simply’ due to improved communications.

In the 12th century, however, there is considerable diversity in these same areas, not just in terms of stylistic content but also in terms of variability and conformity. Bergen and Oslo, close to each other, are similar in many ways but nearby Borgund to the north and nearby Lund, Schleswig and Lubeck to the south do not share these characteristics.

The closest propinquity of all is, of course, within assemblages, concerning footwear quite literally worn by neighbours. Some assemblages do, indeed, show a high degree of homogeneity, such as the Elisenhof, Duurstede and Lynn assemblages. Duisburg also showed consistencies in sole shape, which could be attributable to the use of templates for sole cutting. Most however show considerable diversity, even when care is taken to control for chronological change. Apart from the so-called York Slipper and AOPs, there are few real conformist 'types': the 11th century convergence is a matter of a limited and shared repertoire, in the application of which small differences between shoes were maintained. It is quite possible for a shoe from a London 10th century context to be more like one from a 10th century York context than it is like a literally neighbouring shoe from the same London context. To be unlike your neighbour is perhaps more important, at least in the high visibility ways (see next section). Now it is possible to interpret these intra-site differences in functional terms, in the best principles of Binford (summer/winter, indoor/outdoor, working shoes/leisure shoes.) Whilst not discounting this explanation of some of the broader intrasite contrasts, this does not suffice to account for the finer distinctions. Even given this interpersonal differentiation, however, a broad but bounded repertoire is always identifiable in assemblages. Some variations, even if known about through observation of others face to face (foot to foot?) or through representational images, are just 'not done', at least according to the archaeological evidence. This is particularly noticeable in relation to the extended toe variations in the 12th century.

Propinquity, then, is an element in this patterning, especially in relation to broad repertoire features, but it also seems that propinquity is as likely to stimulate creation of difference as much as to encourage similarity.

b) High and low visibility traits

In chapter 4, Carr's Unified Theory of Style was discussed in detail. In spite of the severe limitations identified, it was decided to use his visibility hierarchies to focus decisions about prioritising certain stylistic variables in Mid-Medieval North European footwear. Attention was also given to the location of these variables in the design and manufacturing processes. Decisions about judging high or low visibility were based on the depiction of footwear in contemporary representations. Carr offers a list of what he calls bridging constructs to interpret distributional patterns of stylistic variables. At this stage, it is worth bringing these into play.

Firstly, though, a caution about distributions based on the data collected for this project. Because of the relatively limited occurrence of favourable taphonomic conditions for leather survival (Chapter 2) and the casting aside of leather fragments as 'rubbish' by antiquarians and archaeologists in the past (Chapter 2) any distribution based on footwear variability is going to be patchy. This is especially the case when, as is necessary with Carr's framework, care is being taken to compare only contemporary assemblages. Furthermore, many of the sites were, at the time of deposition, urban: what rural folk wore on their feet is still largely unknown and although 'bog finds' are helpful in this respect, they lack independent dating. Nevertheless, coverage of the research domain, once secondary sources are included, is not too bad, except for the absence of footwear finds from 10th century peninsular Scandinavia. With this in mind, then, what has emerged?

Toe shape and coverage were prioritised as high visibility variables, and have presented no recording problems from primary sources, secondary sources and representations. Toe variability distribution is shown in Figure 9.5 (Figures 9.5-9.8 are collected at the end of this Chapter). The wedge toe (which is also found along the Baltic coast and into Russia), according to Carr's analysis, would be seen as an active expression of boundaries. This is immediately complicated by the occurrence of this toe shape only with vamp-seamed shoes. Although

construction details were, for good reason, classified as low visibility, in this one case of the prominent and stylised vamp seam, construction belongs in high visibility, although whether the shoe itself is made from one, two or more pieces is not relevant (low visibility) and does indeed vary intra-site (Figure 6.13). If the distribution of the wedge toe runs eastwards along the Baltic, then the vamp-seamed upper includes this but also runs westwards as far as Bruges and north to Oseberg. One-off occurrences in otherwise large assemblages such as Dublin and York are, I think, in a different category. (See below). The wedge toe and/or vamp seamed upper are not mentioned for St Denis and not present in the Oxford, Gloucester or Winchester assemblages. If this distribution is seen as messaging, who is messaging to whom? This will be returned to in the last thematic section of this chapter when questions of ethnicity etc are examined.

The 12th century situation is much more dramatic. In the eastern assemblages where new toe types are common, Carr would construe this as active, emblematic signalling, reinforcing boundaries, In the west, where new toe types are freakishly unusual and the distribution more random, he would, following Hodder, interpret these as indicating resistance by a minority to the mainstream culture. Again, more on this later.

With the 10th / 11th century distribution the variability is more intra than intersite. Carr, interestingly, sees this kind of pattern as associated with ‘active, conscious stylistic mimicry, in order for one group to integrate with another’ (Carr 1995:176). What is worth noting here is that it is the eastern repertoire which has changed, not the west. The toe types and vamps constructions of 9th century York, Winchester and Oxford are no different to those of the same places in the 10th -11th, but the same is not true of Hedeby-Schleswig. Discussion of possible structural reasons for intra-site variability in toe shape will be included in the next section.

Foot coverage distributions are shown in Figure 9.6. The distribution of medium foot coverage is universal over the research domain: these are found at all times and nearly all places, with only special assemblages such as the early ones from Iona providing exceptions. The low boot, just above the ankle up to mid calf does

show an increase in popularity over time but this does not seem to be related to a particular locality. It is the low cut shoes, as discussed earlier, that provide clear patterning, with bounded/clinal distributions, which focus on western sites in the 10th -11th centuries but on Oslo in particular in the 12th century. As with above, Carr would construe active signalling here.

Vamp decoration was assigned to medium visibility, along with fastenings. With hindsight, I can now reassign vamp decoration to high visibility by the late 11th and 12th centuries: this is based on a wider study of representations. Figure 9.7 shows the distribution of these vamp stripe variants and other kinds of patterning over time. Again, the 9th and 12th centuries show diversity, in the 9th seemingly spatially random but in the 12th clearly bounded. The former distribution Carr would see as involved in social status signalling, of which more in the next section. The 12th century distributions are again interpretable in this model as a more comprehensive signalling of group, following very much the same boundaries as with innovatory toes and low cut shoes in the 12th century. For the 10th and 11th centuries there is, as is becoming expected, a high degree of conformity.

Fastenings variability is the trait most commonly used by modern shoe specialists for typologising shoes. The sheer complexity of this area defeats such attempts – many shoes just won't fit, beyond certain broad categories, shown in Figure 9.8. Indeed, within assemblages the variability even within a fastening 'type' e.g. varying numbers and shapes of latches, varying locations of toggles, securing methods of tags, to say nothing of positions and number of slits on drawstrings, is so considerable that fastenings do seem to present an act of individual creativity on the part of the maker and the wearer. This will be looked at more closely in the next section on intra-site variability. There are, however, certain wider patterns. The latchet in particular is (apart from Hedeby) a western phenomenon: clear signalling again. The almost universal adoption of various sophisticated multislit drawstring methods during the 11th century could be seen in Carr's terms as representing a mimicry process, this time westerners copying easterners.

Finally, low visibility features. Carr sees these associated more with personal identity and passive/ unconscious processes. We are back, perhaps, with Bourdieu's internalised dispositions, although Carr links it more to Jung. The phenomenon of the Back Pointed heel has already been discussed in some depth and will be returned to in the next section. Construction methods – numbers of pieces, seaming methods and so on - do show some regional patterning in the earlier phases, but from the 10th century on differences are as considerable intra as intersite. Again, a western idea (the composite shoe) seems to have taken over completely but beyond that the variability presents as an artisan's personal solution to producing the kind of shoes that LOOK right – Carr would diagnose artisan's active conscious or unconscious creative inspiration and preferences here, within the learning environment.

Soles remain in a class of their own, invisible but all powerful. No maps are necessary here. As has been clearly shown the tapered sole is universal for the whole period up until the late 11th early 12th centuries. After that, it continues to be used in London but elsewhere the waisted sole and other refinements take over almost completely. After a long period of shared 'ideal shapes', sole shape appears to be signalling boundaries. Again, this will be returned to in the last thematic section on ethnicity etc.

c) Intra site variability

Primacy in this section is given to intra-site variability, with necessary priority to the larger assemblages. Initial checks of foot size (Chapter 6) suggested that the larger assemblages represent the footwear of people of varying age and biological sex. Duisburg, however, was dominated by larger sizes and some of the other assemblages such as Borgund and perhaps Dublin are represented by smaller adult (mainly female?) sizes. Thus although it should not be assumed that these important modern criteria for differentiating (i.e. sex and age) were significant in Mid-Medieval times, the possibility can be investigated statistically. Variability possibly being used in the game of social status performativity is trickier to investigate. Efforts to display superiority through embodied emulation of an elite

group do not necessarily involve displays of wealth in a material sense.

Archaeological contextualisation is not very helpful either, as footwear is almost always recovered from secondary and tertiary sources (roadways, wharf revetments), picked over and used for recycling, jumbled in with other debris. Only with a few sites such as the Oseberg ship burial is it possible to estimate the relative status of the wearer independently from the footwear itself.

The case for the Back Point as a signifier of female sex-gender has already been made; the Back Point becomes, in a sense, a badge of female genitalia in a low visibility (but not invisible) location. The curious patterning of some Back Points in 10th century England has also been mentioned. For at least 300 years, this signifier was used all over North West Europe. During the early 9th century the Back Point is a rare though widespread feature – what Carr would see as a minority random distribution, linked to possibilities of resistance or reinforcement, but it rapidly becomes embedded and, it would seem, taken-for-granted for the next 200 years. The sample of footwear earlier than the 9th is far too small to make any guesses about ‘start points’ for this ‘wearing of sex on the foot’ but none of the earlier shoes in this study display the feature.

The oval soles which are the only consistent variable value associated with infants shoes, have already been discussed, along with the lack of wear markings on tiny shoes. Otherwise, there is no way in which the footwear of the old can be distinguished reliably from that of young adults, although representational images do strongly suggest that the extreme toes of the 12th century were associated with young men. The archaeological examples are mostly large in size, certainly not those of children and it would be interesting to scan the Oslo assemblage for any age related difference of this kind.

Relationship with social class is, as indicated above, another matter. On the one hand, the quality measure QI (see Fig.9.2) does show differentiation between footwear according to investment in work done. The use of imported silk in 12th century shoes is another indicator of high investment, though not included in the QI. There is, however, never a simple relationship between wealth, status and power. The exotic wealth of many of the dressed burials at Birka (Clarke &

Ambrosiani 1995: 154-158, Geijer 1938, 1983) suggests that wealth displayed as body wear was not in Birka restricted to a tiny elite of rulers and/or aristocrats. The portrayals of 10th century Otto the Great, the Holy Roman Emperor do robe him in impressive magnificence, based on Byzantine forms, but Owen Crocker has commented on the egalitarian nature of the clothing in Anglo-Saxon representations where the King is signified only by his crown (Owen-Crocker 1986: 200). That the represented reality may have little relationship to what actually happened does not need to be laboured. Christianity preached corporeal austerity, although the degree to which people observed this is again another matter: even monastics are being constantly hectored about their indulgence of their bodies (Swanton 1993: 43, 196-8, Dutton 1952: 96, 104, 121), especially in relation to fine clothing. The focus in this study will therefore be on the contextualised comparative incidence of high investment footwear, and the implications of this.

Two of the variables identified above in Section B as showing more intra than inter site variability are fastenings (medium visibility) and construction (low visibility/invisible). Neither of these shows any relationship to foot size. As they both, however, contribute in a major way to the Quality measure, (A slip-on shoe, one piece upper will score markedly lower than a multi-latchet shoe with multi-piece upper, simply because the latter involves more time and labour), there is a possible link here to status display. That this link is the outcome of an artificial construct (my QI) based on assumptions concerning wealth related to investment in body wear and also that the 'cost' of footwear is related to work done must not be forgotten.

Firstly, construction. I have suggested above that variability in construction is rooted in artisan practice, a proposal that would need to be followed up with a detailed study of stitching, seaming and cutting. Although footwear accounts and catalogues (where they exist) contain careful descriptions of seam types and even stitching spacing, this variability does not seem to have been analysed in any constructive way. The cultural locus of the artisan over this period is very under theorised, to put it mildly, involving assumptions based on back projection from documentary and representational sources from the later Middle Ages (Guild

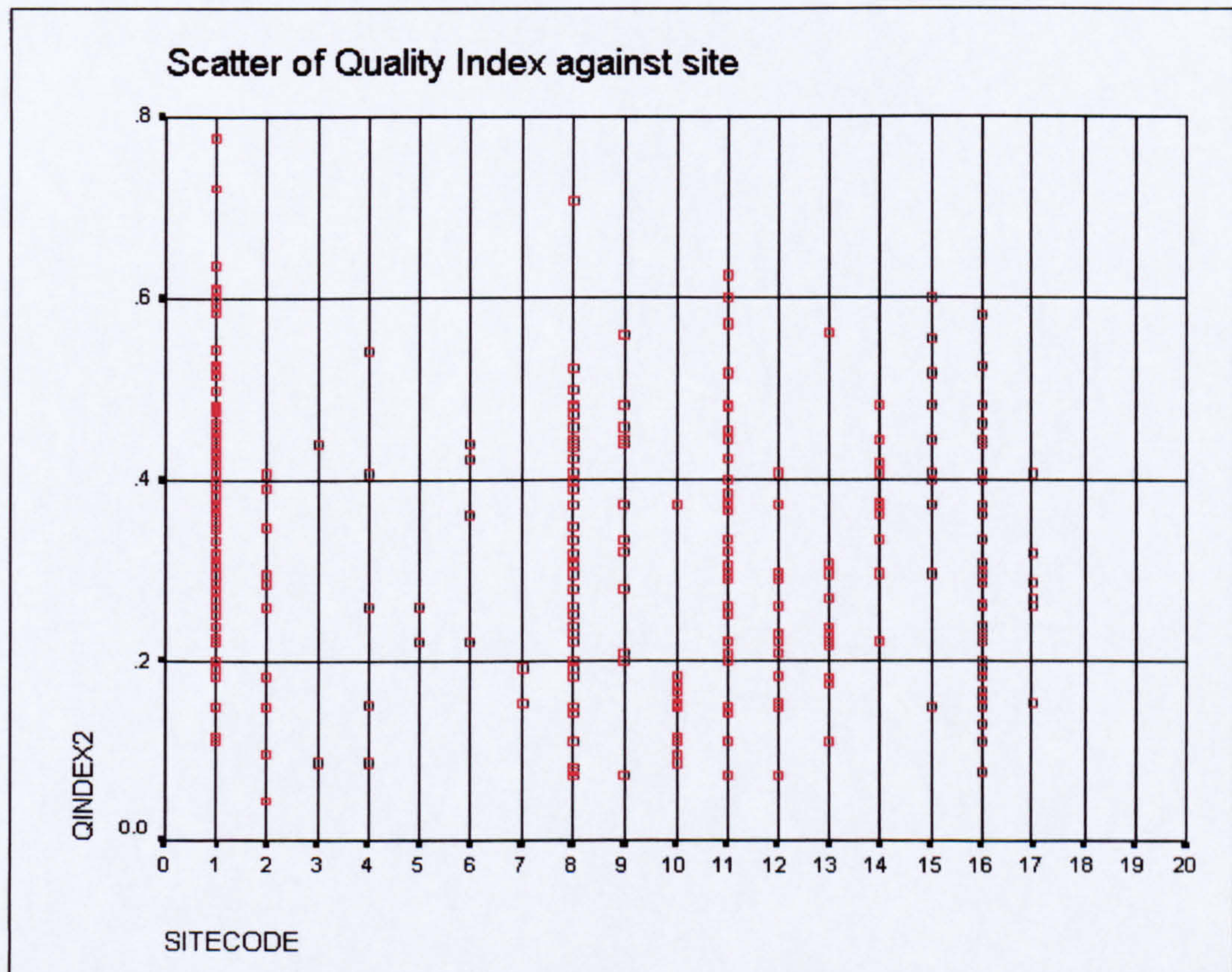
records, local ordinances etc) (See Chapter 3). This area (the world of the artisan) will be one of those proposed in the *Ways Forward* section. For now, the attribution of construction decisions to artisan problem solving and possibly competitiveness, rather than through consumer preference is offered as a hypothesis, which explains the seemingly random variability within assemblages.

Fastenings then remain as a possible overt strategic signifier of inter-personal—whereas in 9th century Elisenhof people seemed less concerned to display such interpersonal difference, at least in this way. London shows the greatest range and also the most marked concentration in the upper zones, implying a greater diversity of wealth and status differentiation than elsewhere. York, Dublin, Winchester, Norwich and Durham footwear is more modest and less differentiated, implying less wealth and a more even distribution— or of course, less inclination on the part of the people to display wealth through bodily performance. Dublin in particular scores low on most of its footwear. With Winchester and Norwich, the small scale of the excavations producing the footwear could lead to misleading conclusions – these could be shoes from a relatively poor part of town. If it had been possible to include the secondary material from York in these calculations, I suspect that the quality ratings would have gone up i.e the Coppergate workshop was supplying a consumer market with limited investment potential. It is all the more interesting to note, therefore, that the Coppergate workshop is the only one in the whole sample, which looks as if it is producing a standardised (pre-made? mass produced?) shoe type, the ‘York slipper’. Footwear from other sites in York displays the same kind of individuality as elsewhere in 10th -early 11th century Northern Europe.

Figure 9.2 Quality variation within and between sites (primary sources only)

The Quality Index (QI) has been calculated by summing the total quality score for a fragment (see Chapter 5 for scoring) and dividing it by the total possible score for that fragment. The highest possible score is 1 and the minimum (no quality score whatsoever) is 0.

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. London | 7. Gloucester. | 13. Duisburg |
| 2. Winchester | 8. York | 14. Borgund |
| 3. Oxford | 9. Schleswig | 15. Bergen |
| 4. Bruges | 10. Elisenhof | 16. Dublin |
| 5. Rouen | 11. Hedeby | 17. Norwich |
| 6. Lynn | 12. Durham | |



In the east, Hedeby, Bergen and Borgund consistently score on the high side. Although the London scores can be linked to the 11th -12th century wealth and importance of what had become in effect the capital city, such attributions cannot be made for the easterly assemblages. This is especially true for Borgund, a small beach market settlement in the far north. The quality of the Oslo assemblage, whilst not scorable for this project, would, I suspect, outscore everything on the list as the Oslo shoes scream money and competitive display: these are peacock shoes. To the south, however, Duisburg footwear is modest though novel in some ways – cheap and cheerful? - and the footwear from nearby Haus Meer, a fortified manorial site, and from Basel further upstream show no signs of displayed wealth or novelty. The enigma of Paladru - high quality, varied footwear from a seemingly remote site – has already been discussed (Chapter 7) and will be returned to below.

Two more possible sources of intra-site variability remain. One concerns ‘uniforms’ -the embodiment of shared standardised identities, imposed through self or other ascription. The other concerns ‘exotics’.

Evidence for the active embodiment of religious identity has already been discussed (Chapters 7 and 8) and used to suggest emblematic religious explanation for the AOPs, the IRB type 1s and a Middelburg shoe. By the 11th and 12th centuries, representational imagery suggests that what had been the mainstream footwear had now become appropriate to those identifying with a religious lifestyle. The lack of footwear from a contextually reliable religious site from the 10th -12th century hinders such identification, but the embodiments shown vividly in Figure 8.8 (Citeaux) illustrate the point. In other words, the church appropriates the past to affirm its present. The blurring of boundaries between female and senior male embodiment as far as footwear is concerned is particularly interesting.

No other specialist footwear has emerged, equivalent to the legionary boot (Van Driel-Murray 2001: 364-5), for example. Indeed, the curly toes of the soldiers in the Temple Pyx imply that, at least as far as footwear was concerned, identifying

with the image of the stylish young man overrode 'functional' design in the footwear of soldier-warriors. The same applies to the masons building the Cathedral (Nationalmuseet Copenhagen): it is hard to imagine climbing scaffolding in such exaggerated shoes. Here, of course, my own modern mind-set is operating: unsuitably dressed? dysfunctional? What is important for this research is the effort to project an identity, the point here being that the desired image is not related to a functional occupational image or 'uniform', at least as far as footwear is concerned.

Finally there is what I have labelled, cautiously, 'exotics'. In some (by no means all) assemblages there are shoes that simply do not fit the repertoire. This concerns shoes which differ in drastic multi-variable ways and which are present as a tiny proportion of the overall sample. This could of course be because I have defined the repertoire – an etic construct- too rigidly: an 'exotic' category could be seen as a let out for analytical inadequacies. At the end of Chapter 3, however, although I set out and justified the assumption that footwear is locally made, it is quite plausible that incomers, whether transient or immigrant, may be wearing footwear made elsewhere which is discarded in the new location. Unfortunately, there is at present no scientific way of establishing raw material origin for leather, so the identification of exotics is at present entirely on stylistic grounds. Therefore, even if a style can be shown to be alien in its found location and very similar to those from somewhere else, an ascription as exotic is highly tentative. It is not impossible that a local shoemaker in the first location has copied one seen on the feet of a visitor or even seen in a representation. I would, though expect more of a mix of variable forms in those circumstances, some local and some 'exotic'. I have argued that this is the case with AOPs (Reid 2002a) which I do not see as exotics but as a local and highly purposive original design which draws on a number of sources including representations and possibly actual shoes through reverse engineering (see Fig. 7.6).

There are several clear examples, however. At Hedeby, one sole was thonged expertly with leather, a practice only found in the western assemblages, particularly the 'English' ones: a visiting sailor, replacing his worn footwear? From the Guildhall Yard in London (mid 11th onwards) comes one very 'odd'

(for any phase in London) shoe, which would be quite at home in 12th century Oslo (Figure 6.20). The same applies to a so-called 'sandal' from Durham, dated on the skimpiest of grounds to the 10th century (Figure 6.20). The single example of a vamp-seamed upper from York could be from a visiting mainland merchant, similarly (though more tentatively) the 2 vamp seamed uppers from early Dublin.

Most important though are the two highly anomalous blob-toed, strongly waisted, asymmetrical soles from early 11th century Paladru (Figure 7.9). If these two soles – which are same size and inverted in relation to each other, therefore probably from a pair of shoes- are set-aside as exotics, then the puzzling Paladru assemblage begins to make sense. The rest of the footwear is entirely within the 11th -12th century north European repertoire and the surprise then lies in the early occurrence of the elongated and hooked toes, rather than anything more anomalous. The problem here is that there are no parallels whatsoever from Northern Europe for the unfamiliar soles. In the early planning stages of this research, a search was made for Mid-Medieval footwear throughout Europe. Paladru was the most southerly assemblage found, apart from a few examples of curated liturgical shoes, and this was the reason the research area was defined as it was (I would have preferred a north-south divide). If these shoes are exotics – brought back from a foreign place as souvenir or loot or alternatively actually worn by an individual whose embodied presence was 'alien' to the locals - where would they be 'normal'? Clearly nowhere in the research domain, even at its widest. This will be returned to in the next section on inter-site variation.

d) Intersite variability

The questions of ethnicity/race/gens/culture domains/empires – carefully avoided so far – come to the surface here. So far, modern site names and geographical terminology have been used and taken-for-granted constructs such as 'Viking' or 'Slav' or 'Anglo- Saxon' avoided. The fact that this has not been entirely successful is a tribute to the institutionalised power of these concepts – one only has to look at the titles in the bibliography to see this (See also Chapter 3). In this

section, to begin with the collective concepts will continue to be ignored but by the end, they will be taken into account.

Firstly, the greatest regional contrasts are found in the 9th and 12th centuries. The 10th and particularly the 11th century are times of convergence in footwear styles.

During the 9th century, the main contrasts are three-fold, between mainland Europe, Great Britain and Ireland. Shapes are very similar – tapered soles, symmetrical toes, and moderate foot coverage, but within this broad framework, the differences are quite profound. It extends to ways of making and cut, materials used for stitching together, decorative styles and favoured fastening methods. The toes of mainland Northern European vamp-seamed shoes are more pointed than ones from Ireland and, in the more easterly sites, sometimes have wedge toes. The Irish versions of vamp-seamed shoes have a puckered vamp seam, not flat as is standard around the mainland North Sea coast, and there are also the pampooties – crude rawhide shoes and those highly distinctive and localised ‘Type 1’s. The scanty evidence from St Denis suggests yet another kind of cut.

In short, there does seem to be a marked contrast between areas separated by water. Could you tell a Duursteder from an Oxfordian from their feet? Clearly, yes – provided that the Duursteder was wearing the dominant kind of footwear for Duursteders, for another element in the distributions at this time is that some elements of the Oxford styles are found in the mainland assemblages, notably the one-piece wrap around upper. The Oseberg burial, for example, has one pair of vamp seamed shoes, identical to those from Elisenhof, and one pair which would not be out of place at Oxford. Ribe, too, has a number of the ‘British’ shoes – though never with latches, always with drawstring fastenings. These mainland versions are also not leather thonged together. The vamp-seamed shoe is, however, unknown in Great Britain, on current evidence, if the argument on exotics is accepted.

Hald speculates on Carolingian models for these shoes, although it is not clear as to which features she is referring. (Hald 1972: 115-6). Unfortunately, the

database does not include any shoe finds from inland sites of these phases such as Aachen or a 'Carolingian' estate villa. What can be remarked upon is the wide range of intra and intersite variation; if the different shoe styles do carry meaning as far as embodied identity is concerned, then this must have been a time when difference was acceptable, perhaps even valued. Representational images from these phases, although strongly influenced in actual content by the iconography of Christianity, also show great diversity in footwear. The greatest homogeneity is found in England.

During the 10th century, the patterns shift. Dublin, York, London, Winchester, Gloucester and Rouen are very alike. There is more variety in stitching material in Dublin and York, but this is, performatively, an invisible feature: York indeed seems to have become something of a centre for new shoe styles, with Dublin and London copying. Hedeby, on the other hand is very different, in some ways more like the Baltic coast assemblages.

The 11th century is a time of convergence in Northern Europe. London shoemakers start using thread for stitching like everyone else. The latchet – distinctively western - dies out and is supplanted by fancy and stylised variants on the drawstring, shared by everywhere else. In the extreme south of the area at Paladru, however, revolutionary new toe shapes have appeared which by the late 11th are being worn by Northerners. By the 12th century, huge gulfs have opened up again, with the western areas rejecting the new styles at least until the end of the 12th and the eastern and southern areas taking up new styles more energetically at all levels of society. There are, however, patches of (probably) conscious conservatism on the mainland particularly around the southwest Baltic. Southern Norway stands out as an area of rich diversity and adventurous new styles so that the shoes of 12th century Norwegians were vastly different to those of a generation before (Figure 7.4), unlike in London where for the most part they are exquisitely made versions of what 'granddad' wore. That it is not exactly what 'grandma' wore, because the Back Point has gone, has intriguing implications.

How does this link with identities bestowed in modern historical discourse?

Firstly, most striking is the absence of anything which can be seen as an embodied performance of a 'Viking' or even 'Scandinavian' identity. The Oseberg shoes are no different to those of Frisia and Britain. Hedeby, advertised as a Viking town, has much in common with the so-called Slavic towns to the east and Frisia to the west, and very little with 'Viking' Dublin and York. The footwear from these two latter places is far more like that of London and Winchester: the same is true of 10th century Rouen, based on a tiny sample.

A major problem here is that what the longship men wore on their feet in the century is unknown. The Lindisfarne grave-marker carvings and the 10th century 'Viking warrior' carved onto the Middleton cross in Yorkshire shows them shod with foot-covering shoes (not boots or low cut shoes), as does the 9th century Oseberg tapestry. It does seem reasonable to suppose, however, that 'Viking warriors' did not make their own footwear (unlike Roman legionaries, for example) but left this to craftspeople, perhaps slaves. In early Dublin, the footwear is distinctively different from that found in the Irish bogs and on crannog sites. Who was making these shoes? Without in the least disputing the 'Viking' foundation of Dublin, the footwear evidence suggests a) that the footwear was being made by imported (slave?) craftsmen from Britain and that b) the inhabitants of Dublin, of whatever original 'ethnicity' were happy to be shod in 'Anglo-Saxon' style. Were the York slippers the trainers of their day? Alternatively, does their distribution signify a movement of women between Dublin, York and London? Certainly there are no signs in the York and Dublin assemblages of anything distinctively 'Hedebian' although, as has already been made clear, the label of 'Viking' for Hedeby is itself shaky from the footwear point of view. Hall has recently drawn attention to this in relation to other artefact categories in relation to York (Hall 2000: 317-8).

One embodied identity, which does show, however, is the 'Anglo-Saxon' up until the early 11th century. This is surprisingly homogenous. The Danelaw division seems to have made little difference to how people presented themselves or how artisans constructed the footwear. Thomas makes a similar point in relation to personal ornamental metalwork in the Danelaw (Thomas 2000: 252): indeed, his

observations correlate with the footwear in that any early distinctively Scandinavian elements were swiftly abandoned by the incomers. That the 'Anglo Saxon' also seems to include Rouen and Dublin makes it all the more intriguing. By the early-mid 11th century, however, Londoner's shoe wearing choices are changing, and becoming modelled on a style common all around the North Sea, up the Rhine (Duisburg, Haus Meer, Basel) and into the Baltic (Schleswig, Lubeck, Stettin). This shift does not seem to have been shared by Winchester folk who remain obstinately '10th century'. It is possible to correlate this 'identity sharing' with the brief empire of Cnut, but not necessarily in a deterministic way: both are perhaps enabled by deeper shifts in perception of opportunity and commonality around the North Sea at this time.

By the 12th century, this has changed. The boundaries of the Norman lands are highly visible in the archaeological and representational records of footwear. Revolutionary new forms are absent from both, apart from the archaeological floppy toes. These extreme innovations are, I would argue, consciously subversive in this context. Inferior in quality to many of the 'classic' shoes, they are almost freakish in their strangeness and not shown in any of the 'Anglo-Norman' representations. They do not persist beyond the mid 11th and do not bequeath a modified popular version. In a striking way, these patterns conform to the transformations shown in the Bayeux Tapestry where the hero 'William' starts off with the distinctive embodiment of a 'Viking' Norman - culottes, garters, shaven head, distinctive physiology - but shows a steady transformation into an 'English' embodiment (full head of hair, understated flowing robes) (see fig. 9.3).

The footwear suggests a symbolic appropriation by the Norman elite of the embodied identities of the conquered. Before the conquest, the 'ethnic' body stating flamboyantly Scandinavian identity had been paraded in the streets of Rouen and Caen and at the French court. Now, they – and presumably those who identify with them – have become a living embodied proof of their right to rule the English. This gives a new spin to the standard archaeological undergraduate essay question about material evidence for the Norman Conquest (answer:

beyond castles, very little). It wasn't that the Norman elite was absorbed into English identity: they appropriated it, glamorised it and made it their own.

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Figure 9.3 The embodied transformation of a conquering hero

In Oslo, on the other hand, the same toes are just one novelty amongst many, and are often combined with other elaborate features to create high quality shoes. It has been beyond the scope of this research project to more widely contextualise the Oslo and Bergen 12th century footwear. One of the few representational images produced in Scandinavia at this time, the calendar tapestry for Baldishol in Norway, shows a male figure dressed in the tight fitting culottes familiar from the 9th century Oseberg and 11th century Bayeux tapestries, and reconstructed from textile remains at Hedeby (Figure 9.4). The footwear is, however, nondescript, and, all in all, this image confuses still further the context for the diverse, innovative, high quality footwear recovered from the archaeological record.

Whatever was happening in Oslo and Bergen does not seem to have been happening further south. The coastal sites are producing footwear of 11th century type even in the 12th and there are even some archaic styles such as vamp-seamed shoes from Schleswig. There are some hints that the Back Pointed sole survived

longer along the Baltic coast. Further south still, however, within the heartlands of the Holy Roman Empire, the acceptability of the new shapes are confirmed through representations (Figure 8.7) and through mainstream versions visible in the 12th century archaeological record (e.g. at Duisburg).

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Figure 9.4 Tapestry from a Calendar (April)
Baldishol, Norway: late 12th/ early 13th century
From Durliat 1981: 159

The world of the artisan over this period is very under theorised, to put it mildly, involving assumptions based on back projection from documentary and representational sources from the later Middle Ages (Guild records, local ordinances etc) (See Chapter 3). This area (the world of the artisan) will be one of those proposed in the *Ways Forward* (Chapter 10). For now, the attribution of construction decisions to artisan problem solving and possibly competitiveness, rather than through consumer preference is offered as a hypothesis, which explains the seemingly random variability within assemblages.

Finally, the Paladru exotics: it is very tempting to see these as eastern Mediterranean or North African – what at the time would have been labelled as Saracen. I have no archaeological evidence for this, but it is historically plausible. At this time (early 11th century) there were many so-called ‘Saracen’ pirates around in the western Mediterranean, and strongholds along the North West Mediterranean coast e.g. at Genoa and Marseilles, so the propinquity conditions are not as extreme as might be thought. To follow this thread out of the north European shoe paradigm is another possible ‘Way Forward’.

One last point here relates to the almost complete absence of comparative material relating to the political entity known as France. This was of course a much smaller area than today, as was shown in the plot of the peripatetic journeys of the King of France and the Holy Roman Emperor in the 11th –12th century (Figure 9.1). Lack of access to the St Denis archive has been a major problem for the archaeology, but what is perhaps less understandable is the lack of representational sources from 10th /11th century France (9th century material is abundant e.g. the original Utrecht Psalter). This may be an accidental outcome of the lack of rigour in my sampling methods for representations, but plenty of material from Burgundy, Aquitaine and Normandy was found. Whatever the reason, what was going on in terms of embodied identification through footwear in the Ile de France at what was, in the words of Cahn (1996: 15) a sombre and anarchic time for the French, remains an intriguing unknown. (See Chapter 10)

e) Final conclusions.

i) Pre- Assumptions

Firstly, to what extent have my pre-assumptions, outlined in Chapter 3 been challenged?

In relation to universality of wearing, the absence of very small footwear e.g. at Elisenhof has raised some doubts at the early stages – perhaps in some contexts children did not wear shoes. The later urban sites, however, show a full range of

sizes. Smaller shoes do tend to be less worn, implying that they were perhaps being kept for 'best' - an explanation which would be congruent with shoe-wearing being a universal taken-for granted habit amongst adults. The minutely graded variability in shoe size supports the assumption of footwear as personal possession, as does the wearing of shoes in representations by all (however lowly) except the most *sacred* males. Similarly, the abundant evidence for wear, repair, modification, making, recycling fits with the rapid turnover assumption, although the curated liturgical shoes are significant exceptions.

Although there has been no evidence from the footwear itself of major technological changes in the manufacture, there are hints that by the 12th century, sole cutting was carried out using templates. This was certainly the case later on, as is evidenced by representations of shoemakers with templates racked behind them. The use of templates is not, however, a simple 'technological advance', self-explanatory in efficiency terms. There is a link to standardisation and mass production here – a decrease in person-to-person variation and conformity to a set image. Archaeologically, soles become 'typable', and spotting individual workshops should become easier. The assemblage that showed this most clearly was the Duisburg one, where certain sole 'types' were evident, and the distinctive highly standardised 'nipple toe' a widespread 'fashion', not a minority statement.

Another dubious area relates to the use of the last. Again, this is standard practice by the later Middle Ages, but the apparent absence of the last from nearly all sites is increasingly odd. From Paladru, that remote village, came several lasts, one of which is singularised with patterning (Mille, Colardelle & Verdel 1993: 255) and York has produced one half-size last, but as far as I know, no others have been found within the research domain. The patchwork approach to 'Small Finds' in site reports may be masking associations as far as this project is concerned, but the whole context of artisan practice and interaction for this period does seem to be culturally invisible. The making of footwear by specialists does seem to be confirmed through the evidence for crude 'home-made' footwear in a different class altogether (see Figure 7.2) and the skill of these specialists seems to be as high in the 9th century as it was in the 11th century. Almost nothing, however, is known about circulation/ restriction of craft knowledge, about teacher-student

relationships, or craft hierarchies. Indeed, for the earlier phases, if Hodges is taken seriously, the whole notion of commercial shoe production is in doubt and a redistributive model appropriate at least for the 'pagan' areas: as discussed above, who made the shoes worn by 'Viking warriors'.

Finally comes the important question of 'locally made'. The only serious doubts about this, given the inability to test for origins, arise from the distribution pattern for the 'York slipper'. It is so unusual to have a 'type' of this kind that at least the question arises as to whether this footwear was exported from York to Dublin and London. In the case of Dublin, perhaps, the 'export' of the shoemakers themselves is plausible, given the political links between the two sites and the more colonial nature of the Dublin population. The London link is, however, more curious. Did York shoemakers and/ or wearers migrate to London? Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that, if the Back Point-small adult connection is accepted, these are women's shoes. Are we seeing here the movement of women? It is noteworthy that the well-made, heel stiffener and inset tongue equivalent of the slipper without Back Point – is a style that is not found outside York. This kind of hypothesis would need to be properly contextualised into gendered material culture from the three cities. There have been hints before that a closer examination of London-Dublin links would be interesting – a brooch mould from Cheapside, for example with brooches made from it found in Dublin - and the footwear, with its correspondences in terms of embodied identity (at least for women) runs with this. To bring York into such a comparison would, the footwear suggests, be essential.

The pre assumptions then stand up on the whole, but show cracks in certain crucial and interesting ways, ways that undermine that whole question of 'timeless continuity' in ascribed identity.

ii) *Embodied identity: timeless continuity or turbulent flow?*

This project has attempted to look at footwear variability in terms of communities, to the extent that a community can be seen as represented by an

archaeological assemblage. What seems to have emerged is immense variability in what is going on. In some places, people are all wearing much the same (vernacular? consciously emblematic?), in other places there are clear structural conventions – the wearing of Back Pointed soles by women, for example – and constructional consistency (vernacular?), but in a context of highly visible personalised difference in other limited ways (structured assertiveness?). In others again there is tremendous diversity and experimentation, so much so that structures according to gender, age and even social class are hard to perceive and may indeed be unimportant compared with other criteria for identification with or against (highly assertive). In some places, there is a strong continuity over time, in ways that can be interpreted as retroactively affirmative (appropriating the past – creating ‘tradition’) i.e. vernacular styles shifting into emblematic, as with church footwear and the Norman appropriation. In other places there is much less continuity with rapid shifts and changes (a Nietzschean denial of the past – what Giddens would see as a key attitude of high modernity) by some or all of the local people: highly assertive as in 12th century Oslo and Bergen. That people in these two places in the mid-late 11th century were wearing shoes identical to those being worn on the other side of the North Sea in London, Rouen, Norwich, Durham and Duisburg makes the 12th century differences even more striking.

Interestingly, there does seem to be a correlation here between convergence in embodied identities in times of widespread predation/invasion in North West Europe (10th -11th centuries) and emblematic divergence at times where hegemonic boundaries are relatively secure. (9th and 12th centuries). It would be most interesting to follow through patterns of variation in highly personalised identity-artefacts such as jewellery, combs and knife-sheaths.

In short, notions of timeless continuity are, I think, exposed for the ideological constructs they are. It suits the purposes of modern popular historians such as Schama and historical sociologists such as Giddens to present past people as passive victims of a barbarous elite, imprisoned in an unchanging cultural context. The archaeological reality, though, is closer to turbulence i.e. clearly not anarchic but so complex as to defeat simple analysis.

Final Comments

I have spent between 3 and 4 years immersed in footwear of this place and time. It is perhaps inevitable that I see footwear as particularly potent vehicles of identity – that they are used in the performance of identification strategies in subtly nuanced ways. A single item can incorporate the unconscious, deeply structured taken-for-granted doxic and the highly purposive, conscious assertive. Footwear can be used to embody conformity and dissent, doxic or orthodox power structures, and instantiate heterodoxy, even in the same shoe. It is possible to make some general statements – the convergence of styles, and inferentially people's ideas about who they were, in the 11th century is a striking example. In the 12th century, however, this commonality fragments into different models – a movement from 11th century orthodoxy to 12th century heterodoxy that is reactionary in some places and revolutionary in others.

Perhaps this is common to all projects of this kind, but at this point all that seems to have happened is the raising of more questions. Some relate to 'black holes' in knowledge - areas where expected contextual richness was absent. Others build on the conclusions with further enquiries – following leads. Some of the 'leads' relate to the footwear itself, but many point to more general themes. Some involve focusing in on places and or times, others follow threads out of the research domain. This is, I think, the only way to end a project rooted in the hermeneutic approach. There is no end, only pause, review, evaluate, incorporate and move on. Therefore, the next (and last) short chapter in this volume, *Ways Forward* must not be looked at as an appendix – a list of trailing ends- but as the only way to conclude a project consciously based on hermeneutic principles. These are questions I could not have formulated 3 years ago, and, if the conclusions from the research contained in this volume are accepted as valid, comprise the most important contribution to the field.

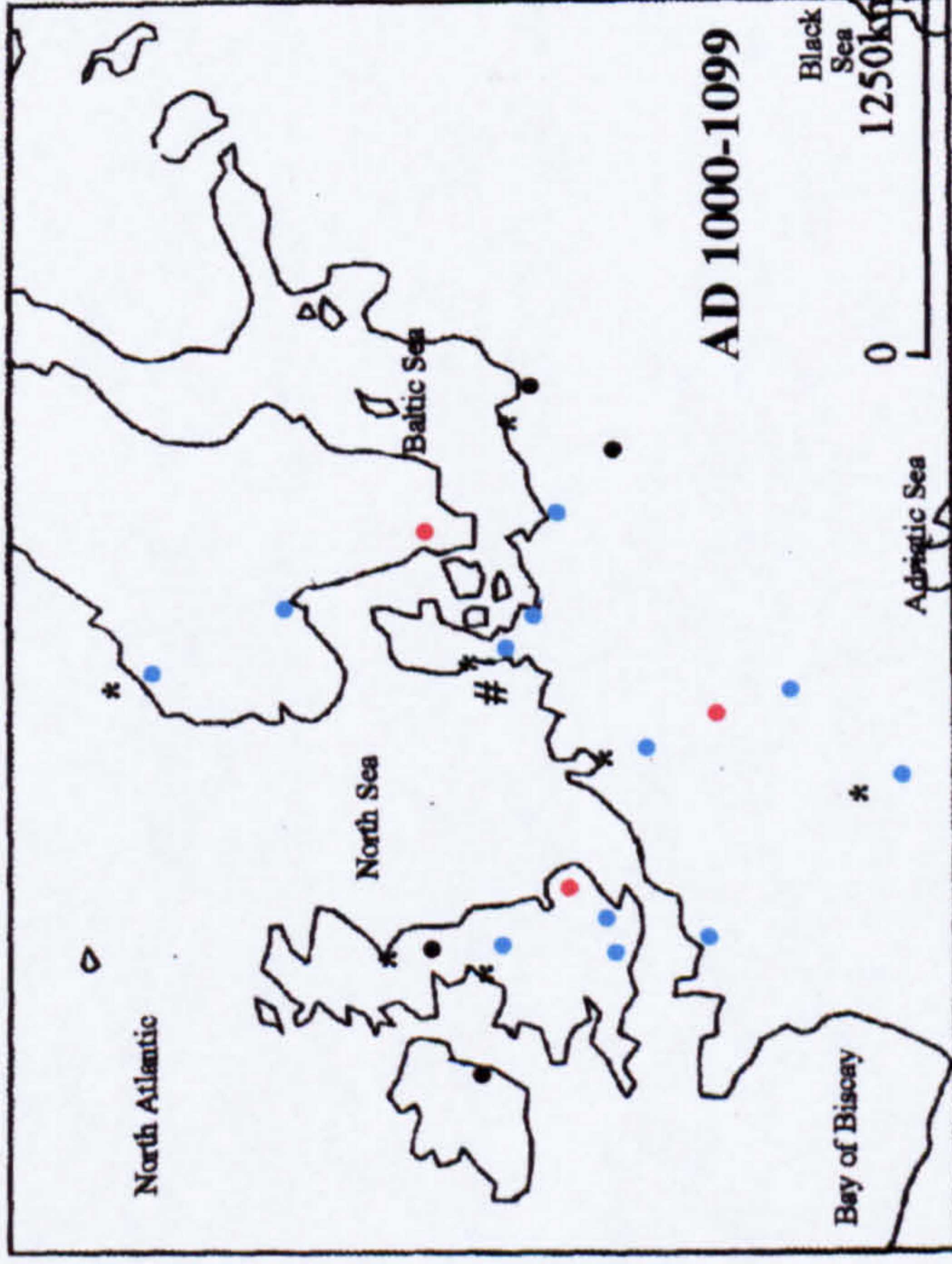
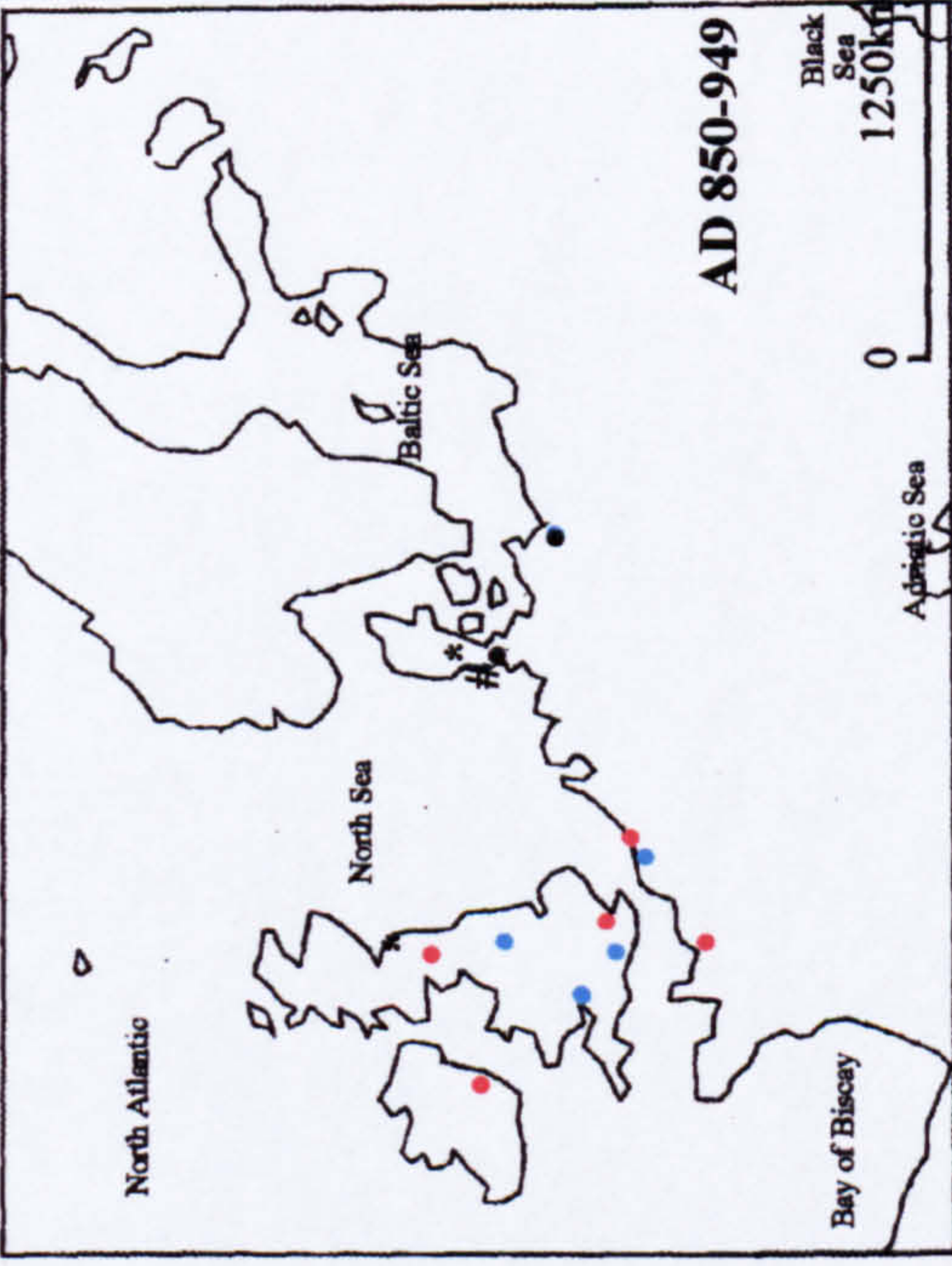
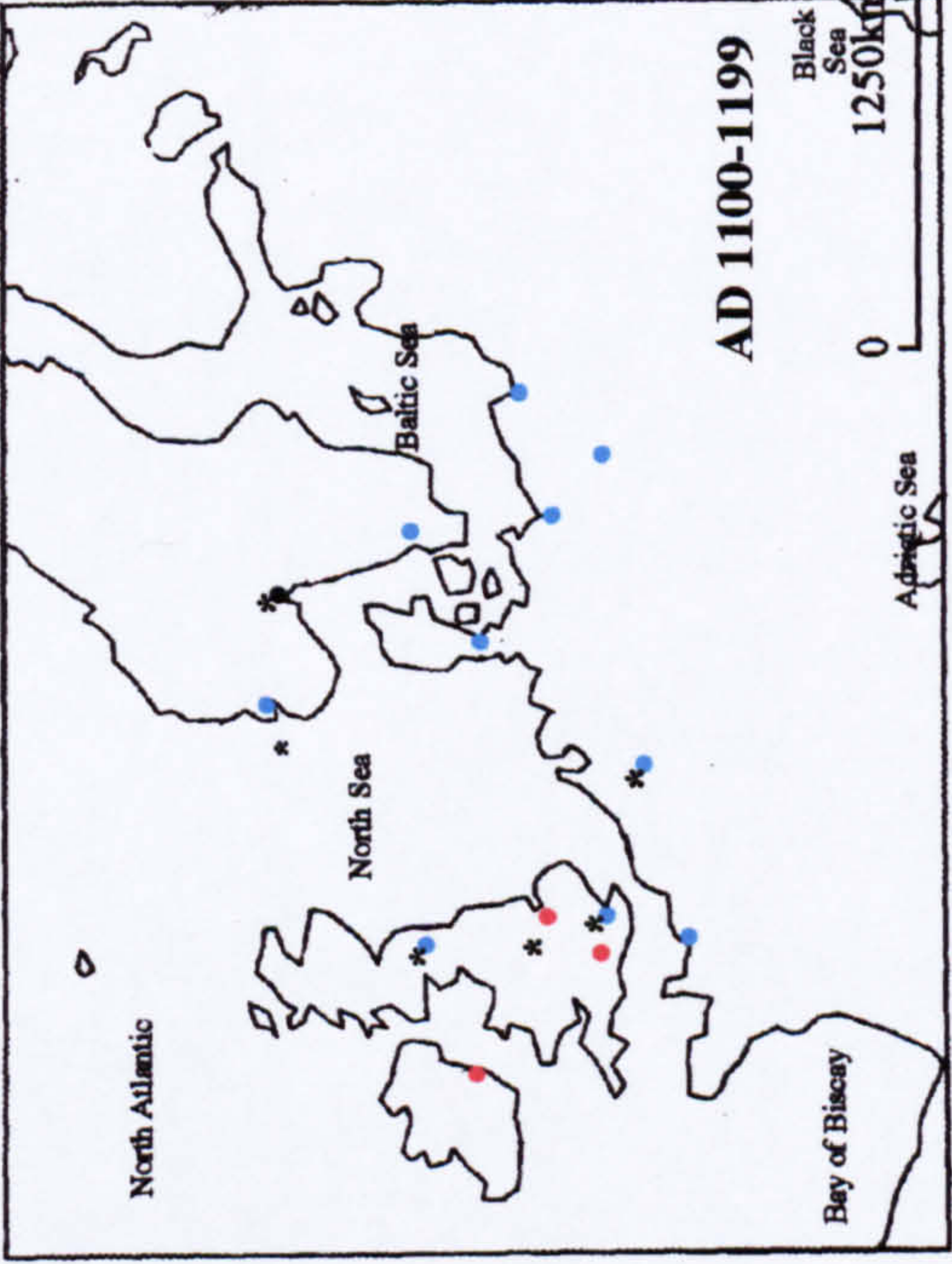
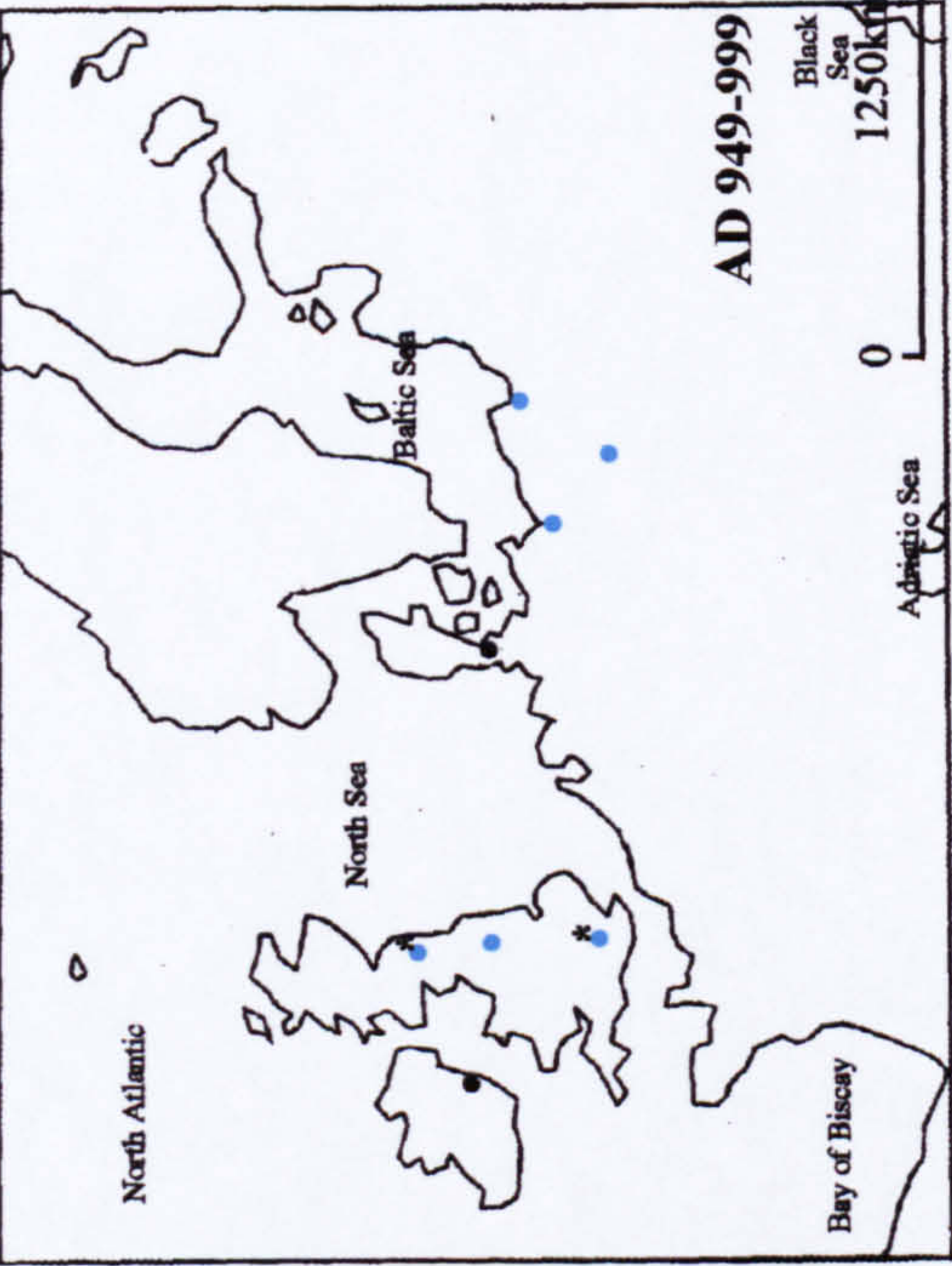


Fig 9.5: Toe forms. 50%+ blunt : ●, 50%+gently pointed : ●, mostly intermediate: ●, wedge: #, elongated &/or hooked: *

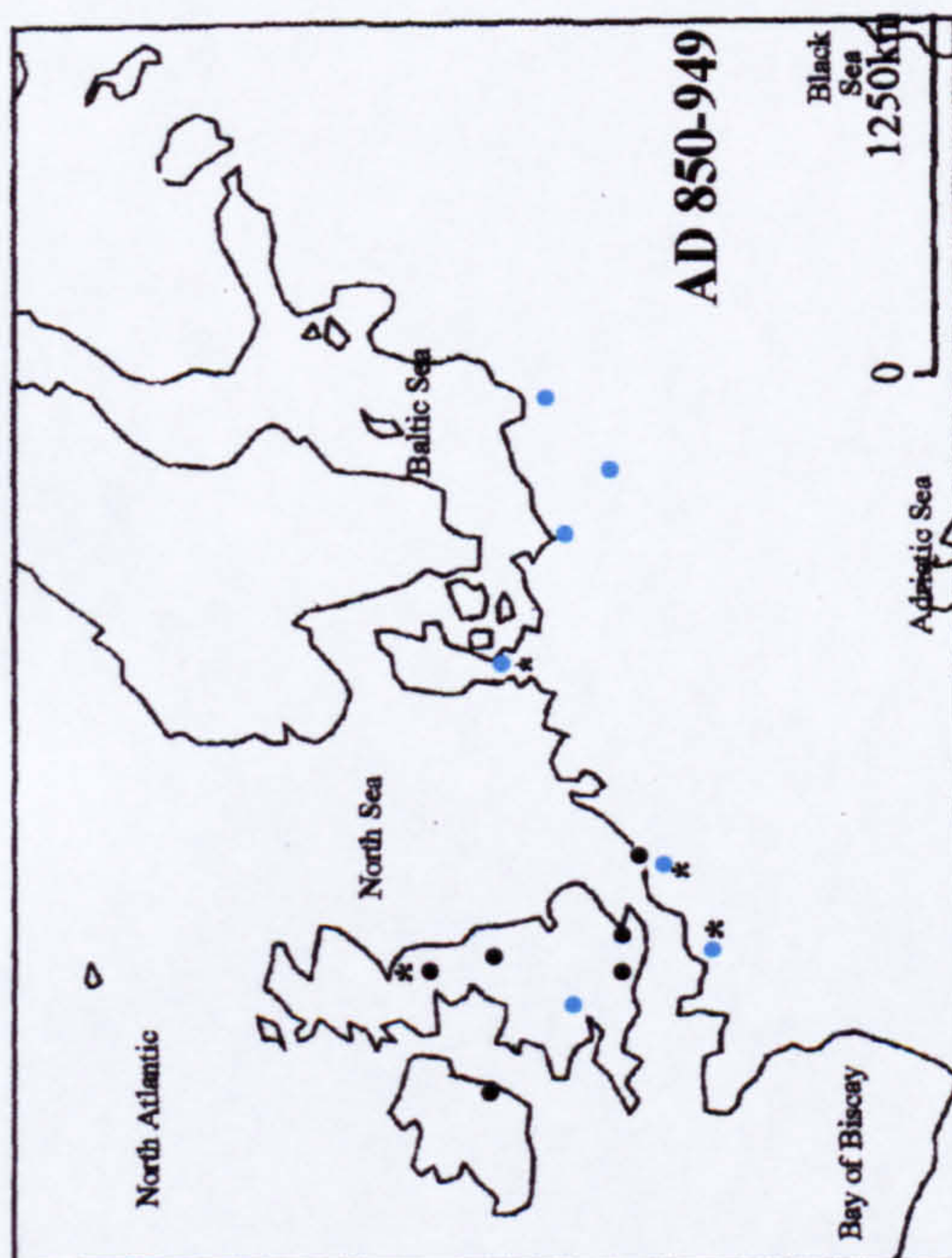
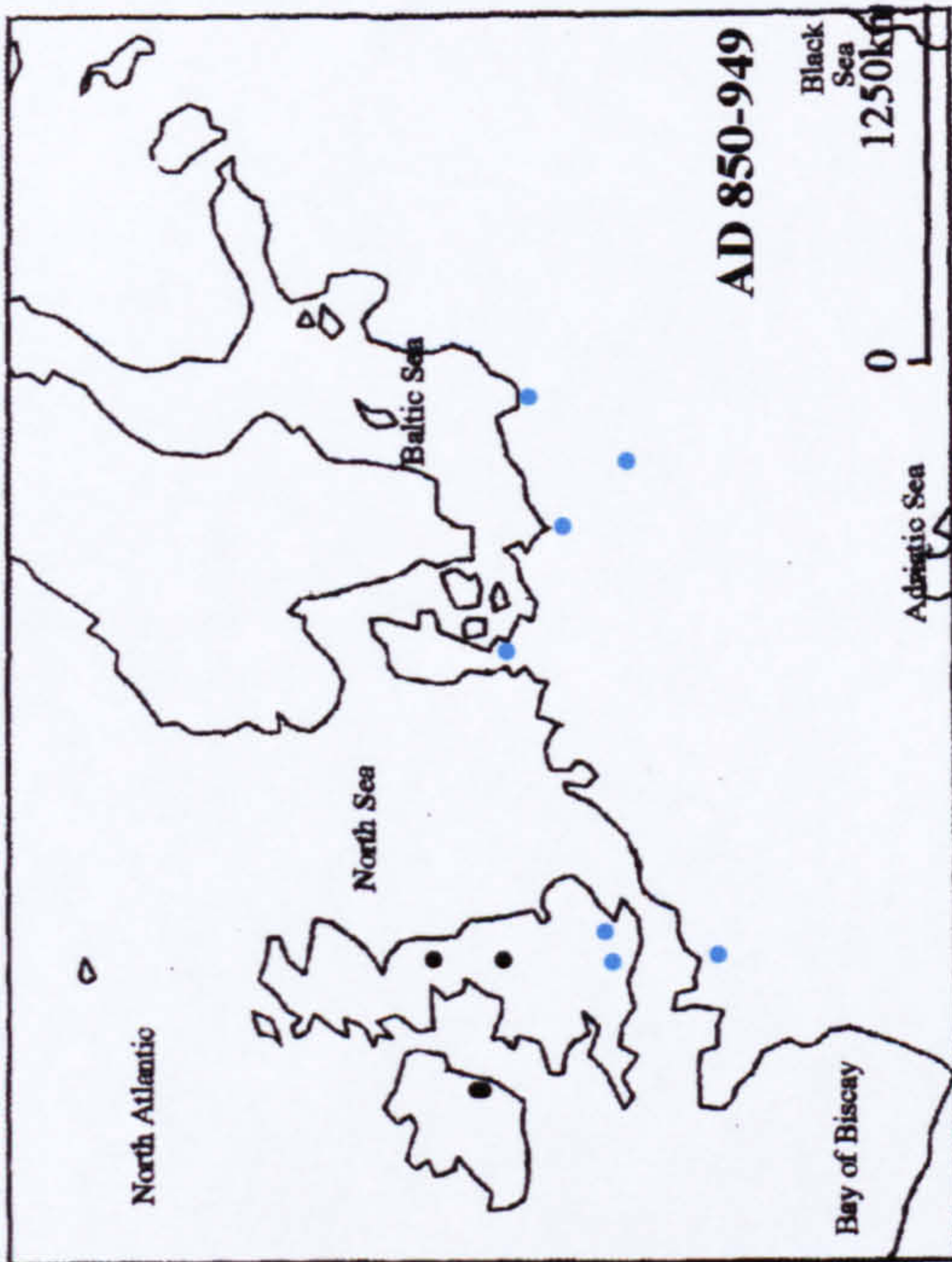
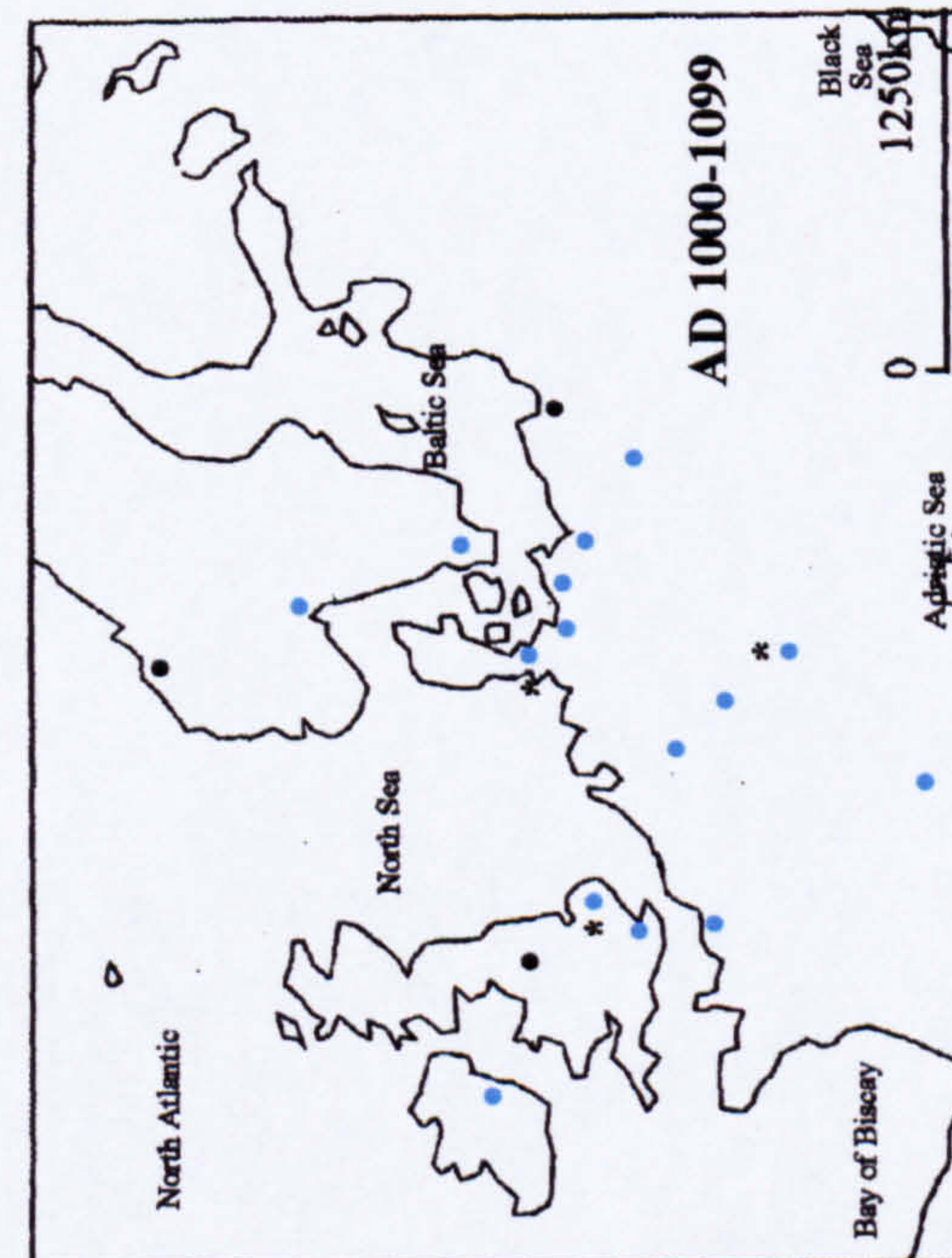
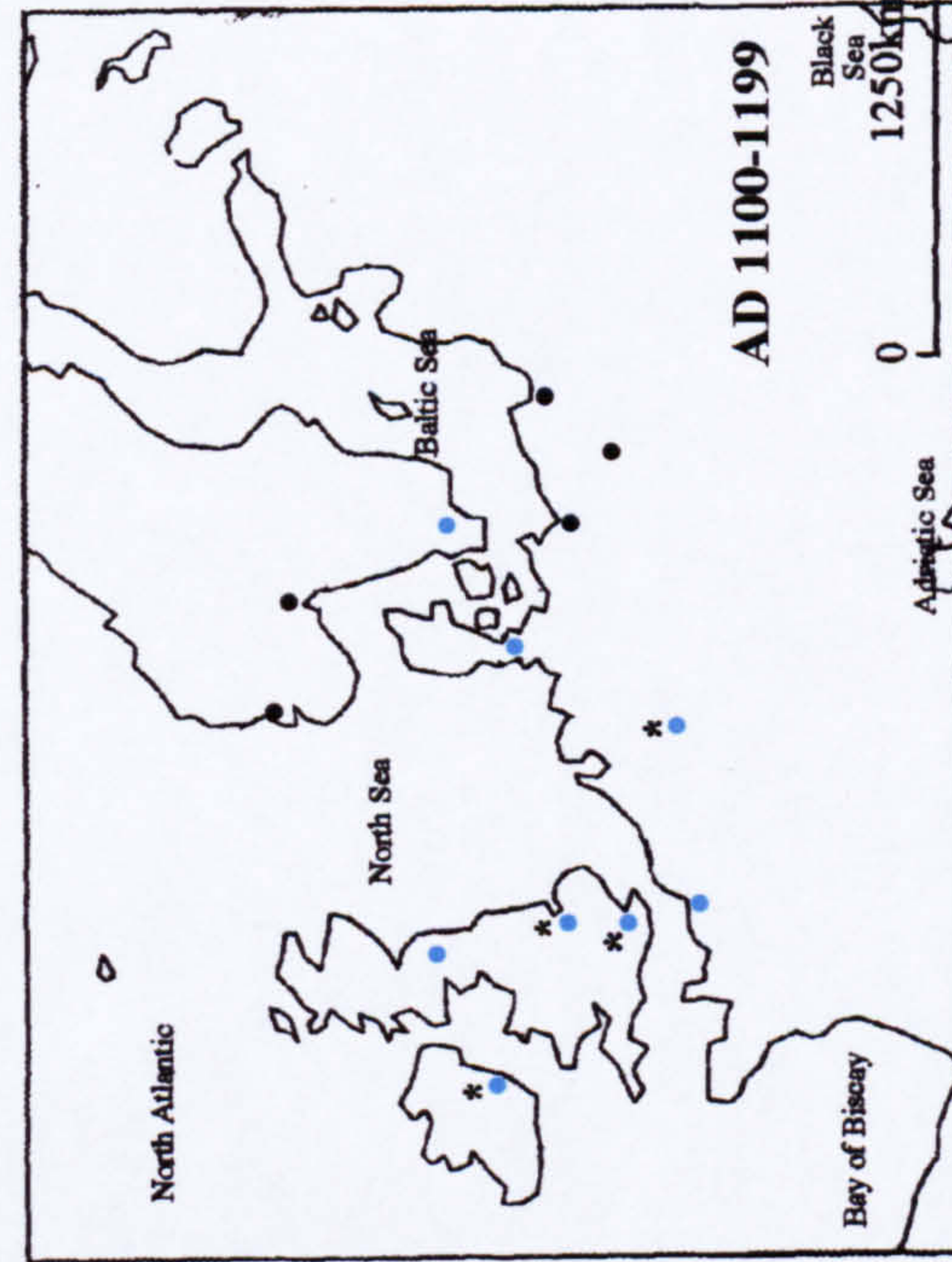


Fig 9.6: Coverage variations. 30%+ low cut: •, less than 30% low cut: •, 20%+ high cut (low boots): *



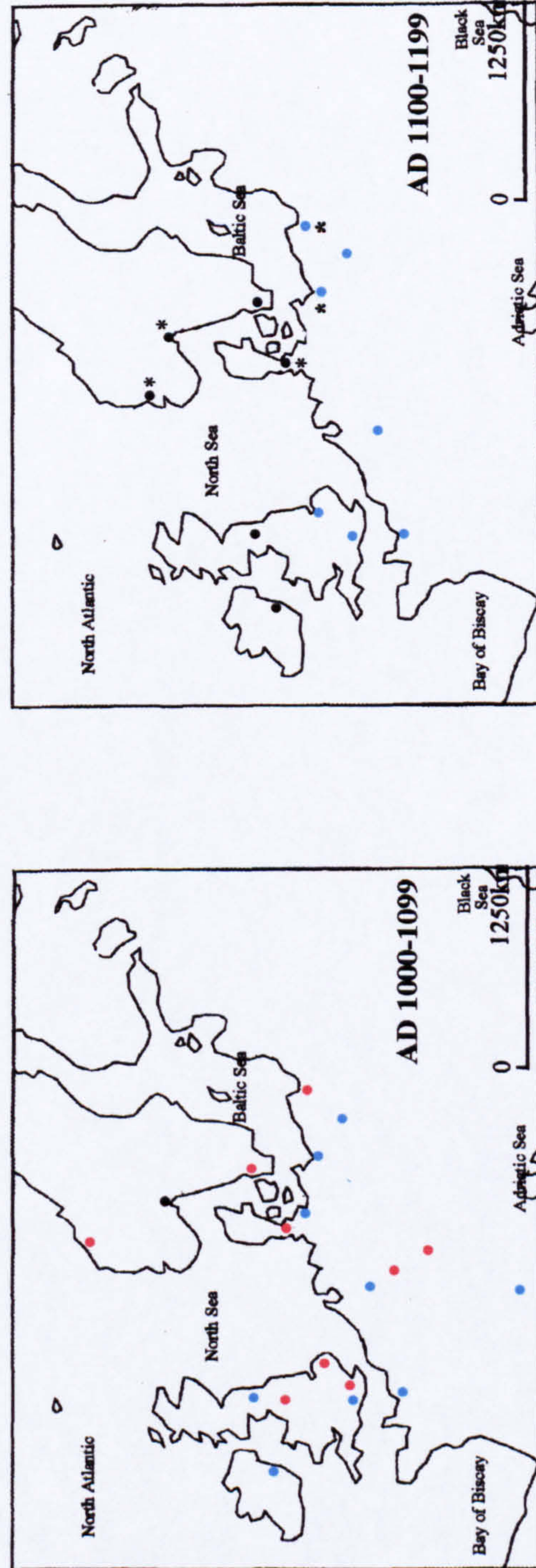
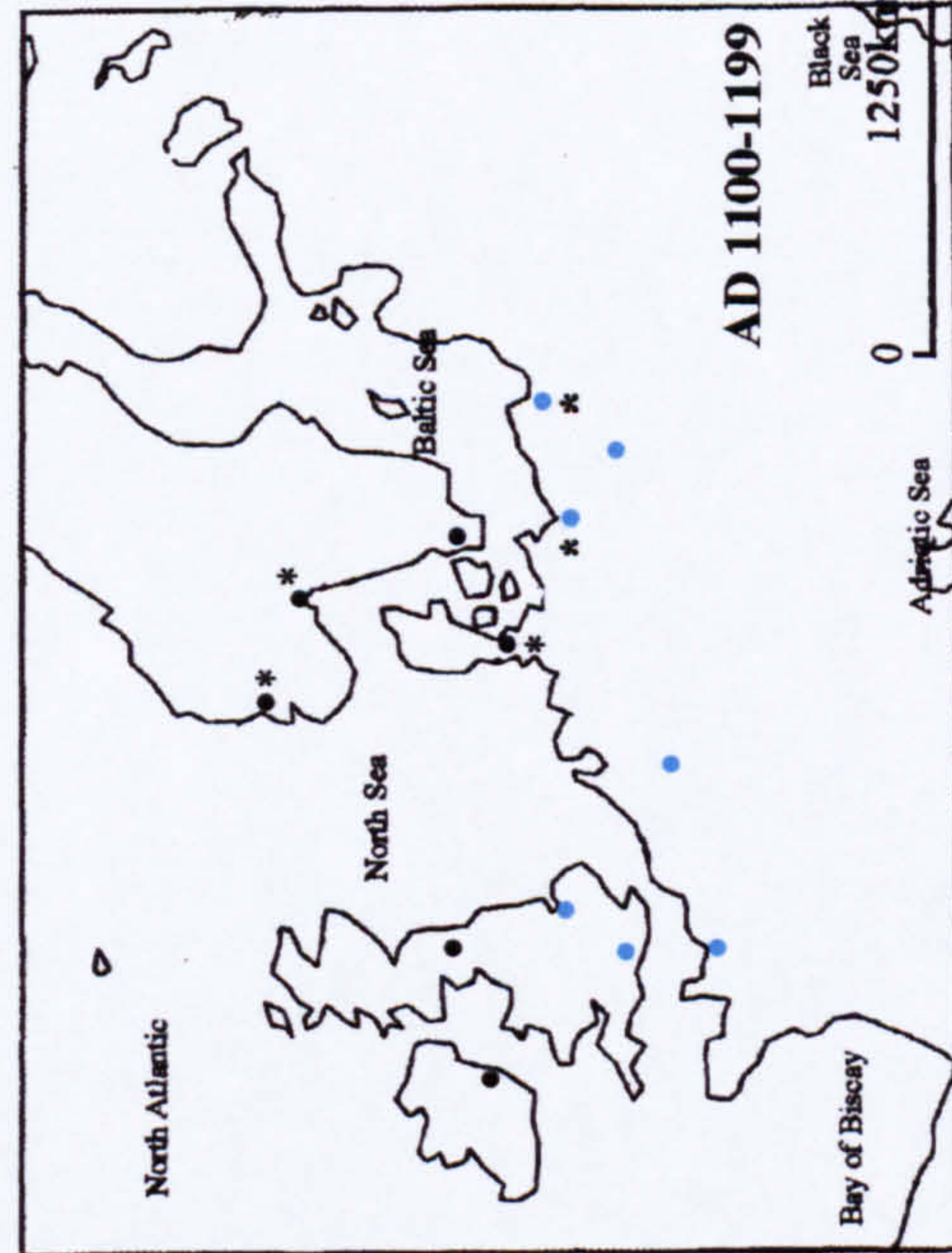
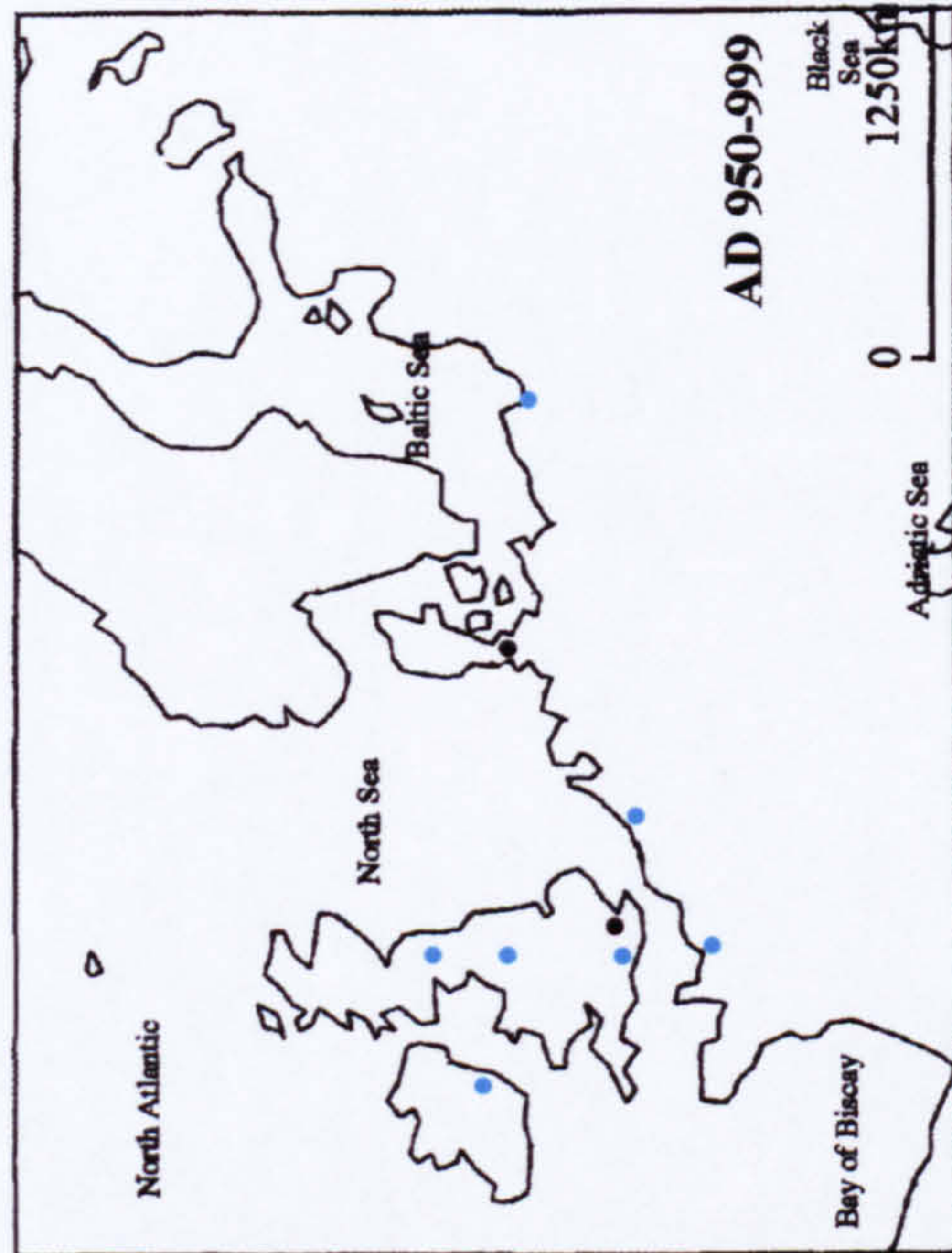


Fig 9.7: Vamp Decoration. No vamp stripe: •, Single vamp stripe: •, Multi vamp stripe: •, Other vamp embroidery: *



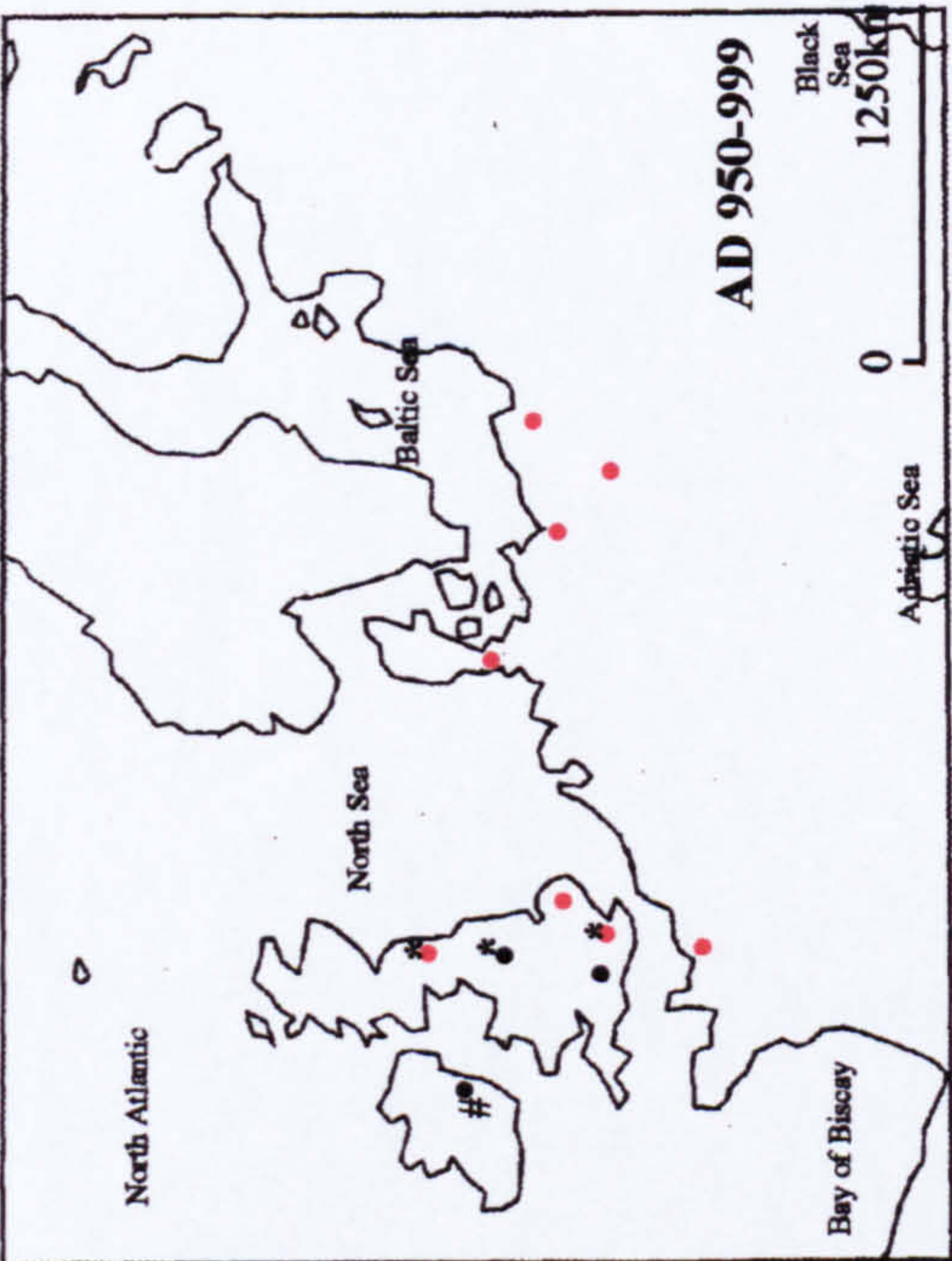
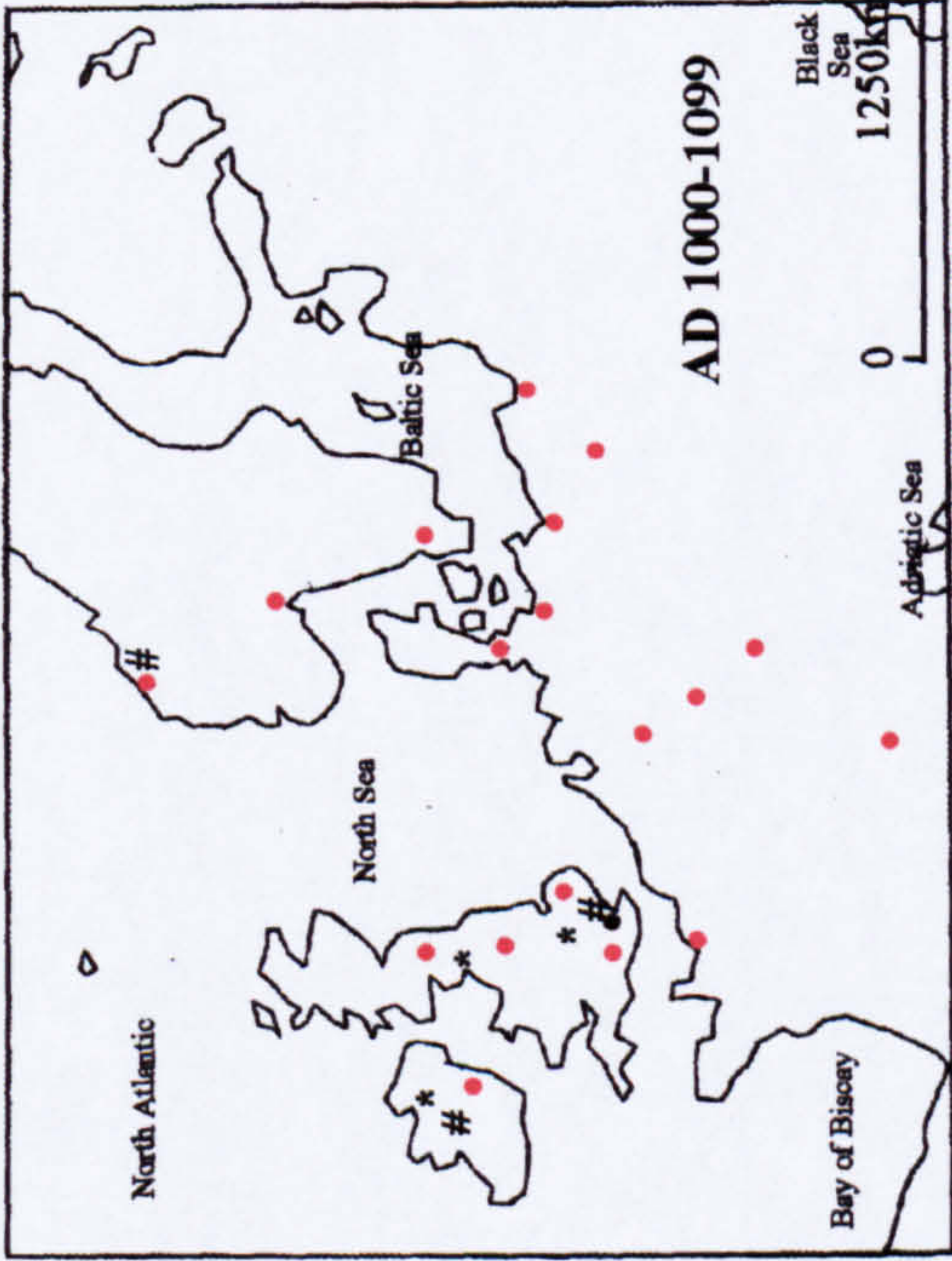
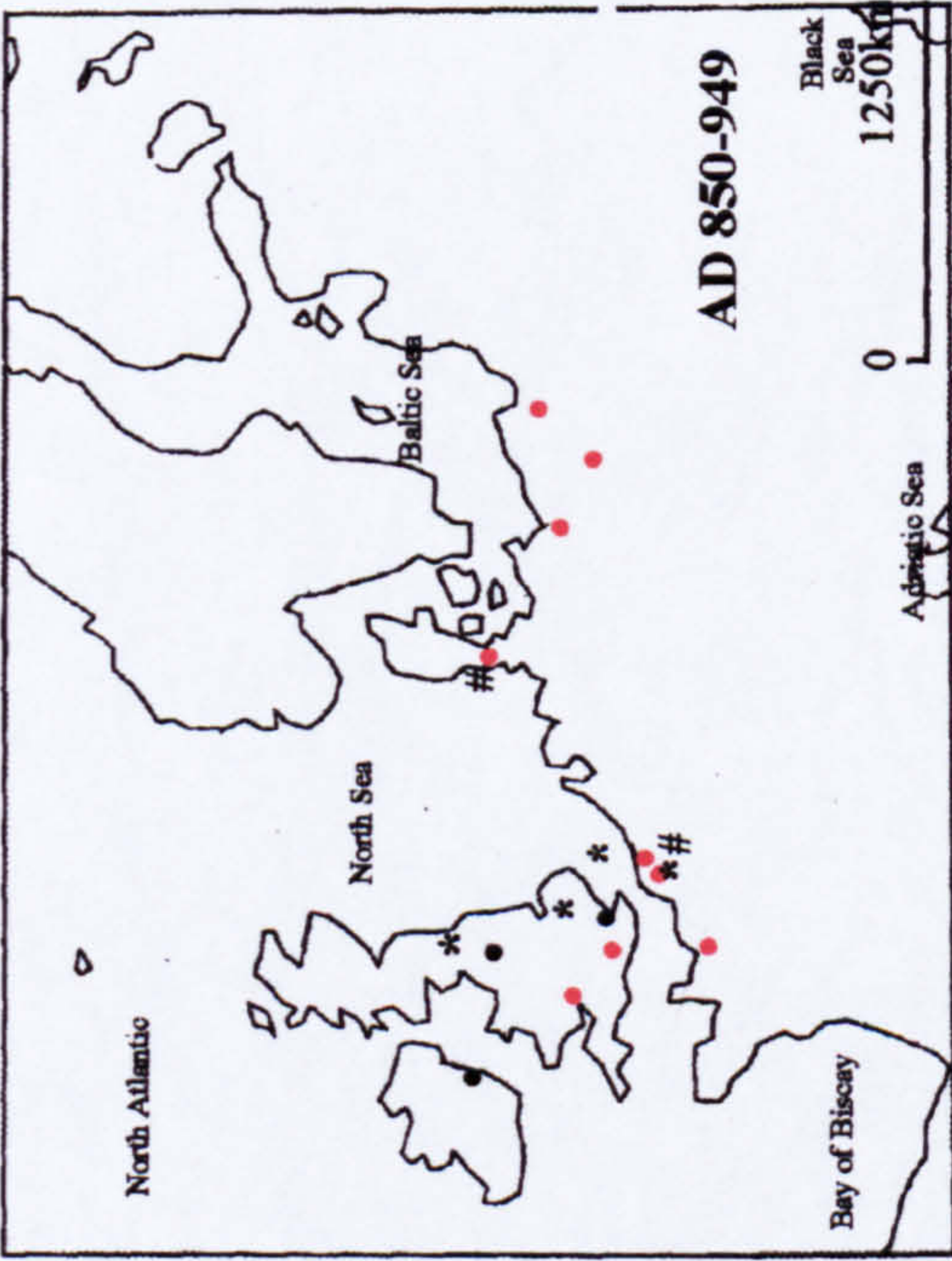
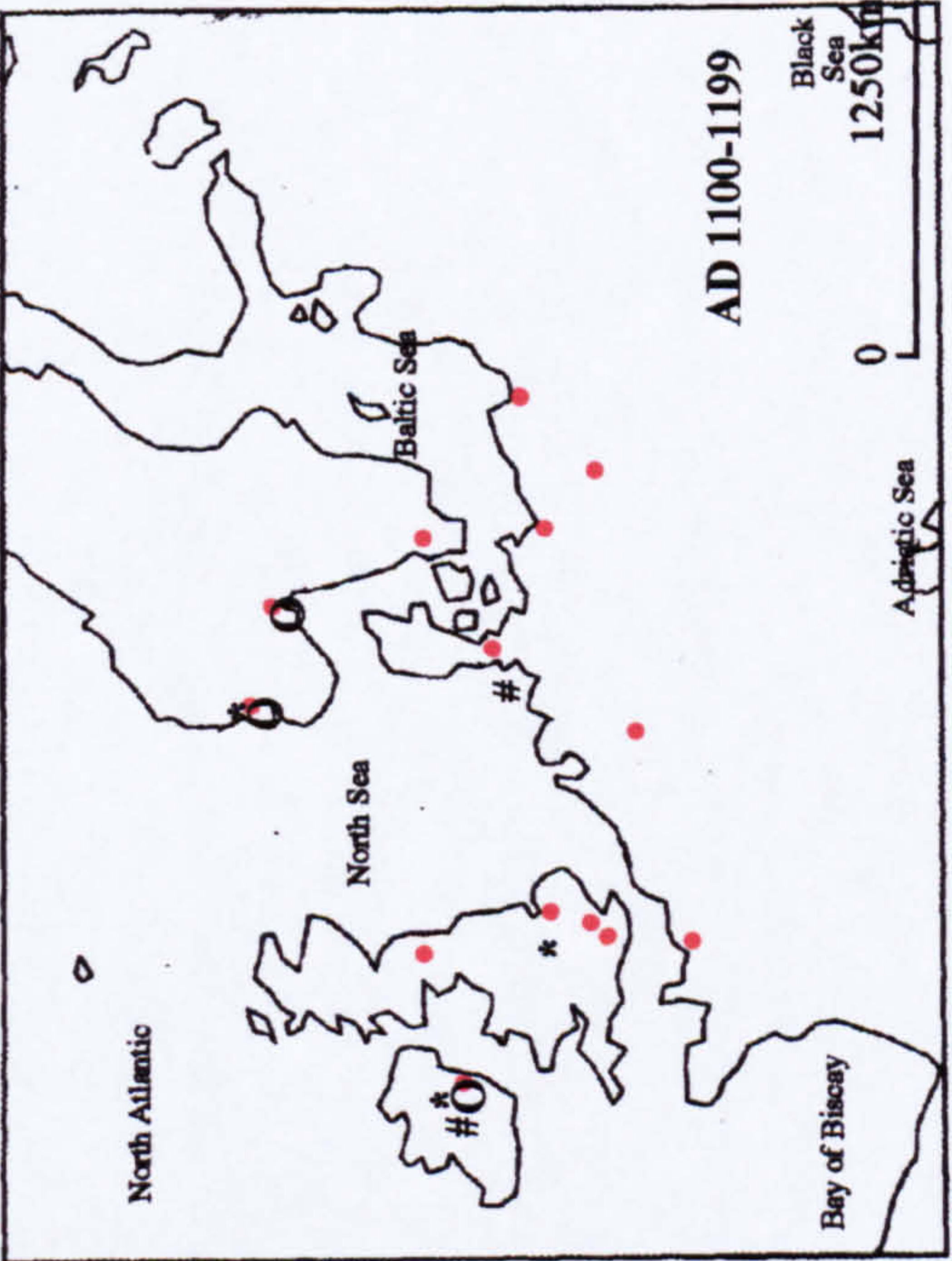


Fig 9.8 : Fastenings variation. 60%+ slip ons: ●, less than 60% slip ons: ●, 10%+ latches: *, other kinds other than drawstrings: O



Chapter 10

Ways Forward

Introduction: Gaps and threads

Carrying out this research has highlighted many areas, which were (to me) surprisingly empty of contextual richness. This may, of course, have come about through inadequate reading in spite of considerable efforts, but in some cases the reasons go rather deeper. Other gaps arise from a lack of awareness earlier on of the possible importance of these areas. In most cases, however, the new questions arise from the findings. Some raise questions to do with the footwear itself, either to do with methodological issues or spatial and chronological links. Other questions branch into broader areas raising issues to do with regional-historical or socio-anthropological topics.

This final chapter deals with the gaps first, then with the footwear threads and finally with the broader threads. In an important sense, the whole field of archaeology becomes involved at this stage, linking back to the points made at the end of the prologue.

a) Gaps in the field

Within North West Europe, certain areas were expected at the outset to have nothing to offer in the way of excavated footwear. Preliminary investigations had suggested that Brittany, Wales and Scotland had no archives of footwear dated to the Mid-Medieval period. More unexpected was the shortage of material from inland Germany, the Ile de France and 10th century Scandinavia (excluding Hedeby).

In the case of Germany, considerable efforts were made to identify archives, published or unpublished. This succeeded in finding Duisburg, Haus Meer and Basel on the upper Rhine. A published account of footwear from Lake Constanx was disappointing in that it dealt mainly with later medieval footwear and picking out the few 12th century examples was impossible. Perhaps further effort would have succeeded with urban centres such as Hanover, Dresden and Regensburg, given the abundance in footwear finds in inland Pomerania (Poland). The large number of interesting representations from the Holy Roman Empire domain has made this gap even more frustrating. Time, however, was the constraint here.

The Ile de France gap is both easier and harder to understand. The St Denis archive contains footwear from this period, and the two shoes on display in the St Denis Museum hint at strong links with the rest of the region. The scrap of published information (Montembault 1998) hints at interesting differences. Denial of access to this archive was very disappointing. The absence of representational material from the Ile de France is, however, more puzzling, as has already been mentioned, and is frustrating because of historical evidence for the rapid rise of Paris as a secular cultural focus in the 12th century. The seeming lack of a published footwear archive for the Meuse valley (Belgium) is also a problem, for similar reasons (12th century prosperity and creativity). The problem in this case is, I suspect, not an absence of footwear finds but a lack of interest in them as significant archaeological material.

With 10th / early 11th century Scandinavia, the gap is, I suspect, more to do with relatively late urbanisation and disposal practice than any neglect of footwear. Even the Trondheim and Stockholm footwear, not covered in this project, is later than these dates. Although the on-going finding of isolated shoes in bog situations is possible, collections of dumped footwear from this period do seem unlikely to materialise. This is particularly frustrating given the unexpectedly emphatic lack of resemblance between the footwear of 'Viking' Dublin and York on the one hand and 'Viking' Hedeby on the other.

b) Extending the footwear field

Some of the threads here relate to what is usually seen as the 'scientific' angle. Leather as an archaeological material does not seem to have been subject to the same degree of scientific investigation and quantification of substance as, say, pottery, metal or glass. As an organic material it does, of course, present a more challenging set of problems, having been altered in multiple ways by taphonomy and conservation techniques. The ongoing arguments about even such a basic process as amount of shrinkage or bloating in the ground illustrates the difficulties involved. It is not even possible to tell reliably in many cases what kind of animal hide the leather has come from, let alone the region the animal was living in. I have not come across any attempts to use DNA analysis to investigate such affiliations: leather is, I suspect, not 'significant' enough to justify the expense. Thus the presence of 'exotics' remains, unhappily, a stylistic diagnosis

In terms of work with stylistic variability, there are a number of methodological issues to be raised. The subtle 'organic' shapes of footwear do not lend themselves to quantification and, whilst to suggest some sort of overall protocol for recording would be a waste of breath, in relation to sole shape a systematic protocol would be useful to those interested in broad spatial and chronological change and stability. The difficulties of the common sense approach have already been discussed, and a 'slice' method offered but it should be possible with increasingly sophisticated scanning and shape-analysing software to develop a less laborious and more reliable method for sole shape. Sole shapes are, as I have argued, very distinctive and powerful, yet more 'vernacular' than other more conspicuous features such as fastening methods, these latter being more useful for intra-site differences and similarities related to gender, age, class etc: that this begins to edge into the whole question of when does a 'type' (archaeologically serious) become a 'fashion' (archaeologically trivial) has already been discussed in this study. To produce a 'typology' of shoes has been rejected as an overall aim, but there is no doubt that a chronological and spatially organised cataloguing of variability, presented in an accessible way, is an often expressed need of archaeologists in Northwest Europe.

Many questions arise from the footwear variability itself. The novel designs observable in 12th century Bergen and Oslo are highly intriguing: where are these new designs coming from? The same applies to the 'exotics' identified at Paladru. Indeed, the whole question of easterly links runs underneath the comparison of North European assemblages, in the earlier period because of Scandinavian and Imperial trading links and later because of crusader movements. It would also be most interesting to see what was happening to footwear styles and techniques in the more isolated Scandinavian colonies such as Iceland and Greenland.

c) Extending the broader field

Historically, this project has raised a number of issues, many of which were unexpected. The strong resemblance between London, York and Dublin is one of these, especially as, if the Back Point/ small adult association is accepted as gendered, the most striking resemblances relate to women's shoes. It is perhaps time to set aside the modern 'heritage' notions of these 3 cities and carry out structured comparison of embodiment assemblages (on Treherne principles: Treherne 1995) for the 10th century. Hedeby and perhaps the Isle of Man could be used as 'controls'. The investigation of gender issues is an obvious priority.

Another area of investigation relates to the shoemakers themselves. The use of Carr's model highlighted the role of the artisan in generating innovation and/or maintaining 'tradition'. Clearly if one is assuming an entrepreneurial artisan-consumer separation, as was discussed in Chapter 3, there must be a recursive relationship between customer and maker. Carrying out this research has brought home to me how little is known about this. Although many archaeological publications deal with the technical details of craft skills, (e.g. Wilson 1976) very little is heard about the craftspeople themselves. This may well be an 'English' phenomenon – without having detailed knowledge, my impression of archaeology in eastern Europe, for example, is that far more attention is given to the makers-creators of material culture than is the case in this country where

high-status performative consumers are of more interest – but it is an omission which needs addressing.

The 11th –12th century shift from openness to closure also raises enormous questions to do with lived ‘culture in the body’ and its possible relationship to the built environment. The late 11th to 12th century does seem to be the locus for fundamental shifts in the conceptions of the body: we are back to the two shoes shown in the first figure in the prologue.

A last major aspect from the historical perspective, running through the whole period, is the locus of the church. Although the representations used have in almost all cases been produced by those totally identified with the institutions of the church, the primary evidence for the footwear of the religious has been scanty. What does exist is all from the earlier phases, and shows many intriguing variants, linked very probably with Mediterranean imagery and reality. The images used in the representations do, however, raise many questions to do once again with gender and sexuality, with age and maturity, with ascribed estate and achieved status, as do the constant exhortations about bodily discipline. The actual performativity of the formally religious is harder to access, and I am not sure anyone has actually tried for this period, representations being relied upon in a taken-for-granted way to ‘portray’ the inhabitants of monasteries and convents.

Finally, there are threads to do with broad theoretical issues. In a sense, this project has involved agency writ large. Its main limitation has, of course, been the focus on one narrow field of action i.e. the making, wearing and disposal of footwear. A significant point however, is that one of the few comparable studies, that of Gabor Thomas for personal ornamental metalwork in the Danelaw (Thomas 2000), moves towards similar conclusions as far as Scandinavian embodiment was concerned in the England context. It would be most interesting to carry out a Treherne-style analysis of embodiment for this period in Northern Europe, provided that everyone (rather than just the ‘beautiful warriors’) is included. The research domain is reliably known to include situations of conquest, large scale predation, evangelism, colonisation, imperialisation and extensive trading of goods and services and the embodied material culture

patterns observed in this partially known period could perhaps usefully be related to situations where the contexts are much less known. Whether or not such a transfer of patterns between differing historical contexts is valid is, of course, another question, perhaps the most important of them all.

Finishing comments

This account began with a single shoe, has moved through thousands of other shoes and ended with hints at an approach for interpreting personal artefactual evidence across wide areas. It has involved what at times seemed like an endless series of compromises and expedient measures. Yet the richness of the evidence remains extraordinary considering how under-used it has been. To hold in your hand a perfect, tiny infant shoe or an elaborate, much worn, much repaired adult shoe is, I think, a genuine moment of privileged access to the existential life of ordinary people. I only hope I have been able to use these once-prized possessions as they deserve.

Acknowledgements

An enormous debt is owed to all those who enabled access to the footwear archives across North West Europe. This is not a matter of simple permissions: the interest and support encouraged me greatly in what can be a lonely activity. Particular gratitude to: John Shepherd of the Early London Archive at Eagle Wharf; Lindy Brewster at Durham; Arne Larsen at Bergen; Gunter Krause at Duisburg; Christine O'Donnell at York; Andy Halpin at Dublin and Dr Patrick Wallace who made Dublin possible; Bieke Hillewaert at Bruges; Ingrid Ulbricht at Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig. Also thanks to staff at Rouen, Kings Lynn, Gloucester, Winchester, Oxford and Norwich who made me welcome.

For keeping me going during the 'loss of faith' stage, I owe a great debt to Professor Ruth Whitehouse of the Institute of Archaeology, UCL, my main supervisor. Ruth's interest in my ideas never flagged, and I owe to her the fact that this is not simply a shoe catalogue. My debt to Clive Orton, my second supervisor, who kept a critical eye on my methods and interpretations, is also considerable. Any weaknesses in this account are entirely mine and in no way attributable to Ruth or Clive.

Finally, and most profoundly, I owe a crucial debt to the Museum of London Archaeology Service, MoLAS as it was then, and especially to the team at Number One Poultry (1995-6). For a mature volunteer to be treated, from the outset, as a colleague by professional archaeologists is a rare privilege in these days of professionalisation. For Richenda, Graham and Sally to assign me to the footwear was exceptional. This inclusion, whatever the outcomes of this PhD, enabled me to become a different person, for which I will be forever grateful.

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